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Buchanan selects new city manager

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

BUCHANAN — Tony McGhee has been selected as the new Buchanan City Manager after a second round of interviews Monday. McGhee was one of three candidates invited back to make presentations to City Commissioners Monday afternoon and was chosen unanimously by the commission later that evening.

The other two invited back to make presentations Monday and meet with city staff after Friday's interviews were Caro, Mich. city manager Scott Czasak and Berrien County Election Administrator Kathryn Klemesrud.

"We had 50 applicants and then were given 10 to choose from," Commissioner Dan Vigansky said after making the motion to offer the job to McGhee. "We chose five and then interviewed four. Any one of them would make a really good city manager."

"We picked the one that is the best fit for us right now," he added. "We're at the precipice and cusp of doing great things. Buchanan has a shot, that's why I fight so hard. I hope he accepts our offer."

Commissioner Patrick Swem said he thought the search process followed this year was much more thorough than the one the city followed last year including having staff input. "I want to thank all the applicants," he said. "We had a much more thorough review this time and could see how people thought on their feet. I think Tony will be an excellent choice."

Commissioners Raquell George and Larry Money and Mayor Mark Weedon also expressed thanks to the other applicants and welcomed McGhee to the city. Commissioners will now negotiate

See SELECTS, Page A3

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Tony McGhee

NILES DISTRICT LIBRARY

Niles District Library to host Local Author Book Sale

COMMUNITY REPORT

NILES — The Niles District Library is gearing up to host a special event during Small Business Saturday. The library will be hosting its Local Author Book Sale from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, November 30.

Local indie authors will be located in the Niles District Library Rotunda for guests to find their next favorite book or to pick up a few books as gifts. The event will allow those in attendance to meet and support talented local authors and have their books signed.

Featured Authors:

Martin Klubeck - The Adventures of Sir Locke the Gnome, The Time Warp King, Don't Manage... Coach!, and other titles.

Ashley S. Hattle - A Haunting Between Worlds and Cluster Headaches: A Self-Help Guide Annie Rettic - Gratitude: A Path To Grace

Carla Murphy - Unlocked Identity

Ann Born - Local Color

Doris Holik Kelly - Mystery of the Copper Turtle and The Crows' Warning: Escaping the Wildfires of 1881

Gabriel Morse - The Secret of Lantern Hill

Parny Clanton - A Journey to Belief

Carmen Ella - The Adventures of Captain Dither

Merry Clark - Dandelion Roots Run Deep

READY TO SERVE

Niles City Council welcomes new members

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Niles City Council welcomed two new members to its ranks.

Sheila Koebel and Jessica Nelson were sworn-in as members of council during Monday's meeting at the Niles Fire Department.

Incumbents Georgia Boggs and Charlie McAfee, as well as Mayor Nick Shelton, were also sworn in for their new terms.

Koebel defeated Josiah Bliss in the Ward 2 race and Nelson defeated Joel Rogers in the Ward 4 race.

The duo replaced Amanda Dunnem and John DiCostanzo, who decided not run for new terms.

Koebel, who owns and operates the Underground Laugh Lounge with her husband Karl, is a Niles High School graduate who is looking forward to representing the second ward.

"I'mm just excited about the things we're gonna do," Koebel said. "We're going to do some positive things, I think we're all gonna work together well. I think

See SERVE, Page A7

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS CONTRIBUTOR
From left: Georgia Boggs, Sheila Koebel, Charlie McAfee, Jessica Nelson and Nick Shelton were sworn in for new terms Monday.

Historic Ferry Street School site reverts to city property

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The former site of Ferry Street School could soon receive a new lease on life.

The Niles City Council moved 7-1 to accept the quit claim deed for the former Ferry Street School property from Ferry Street Resource Center.

The property where the historic Ferry Street School stood – now just a façade – is located was owned by Niles Community Schools. This property was donated to the City of Niles and was later donated to the Ferry Street Resource Center with the condition of the historic classroom being maintained and available to the Niles History Center and the Public.

Constructed in 1867 at a cost of nearly $3,000, the Ferry Street School opened in January 1868 as Niles's school for "colored children." In 1870, the Niles school system was integrated, and the facility closed. It reopened as an integrated school in 1873, with the west wing added in 1903. From 1956 to 1975 the School for Exceptional Children was located here. In 1975, concerned citizens began restoring the original

See SITE, Page A4

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

OBITUARIES

Barbara Castello
Patricia Lou Stroud
Arthur Middleton
Philip Crawford
Dathel Duffel
Wayne Hentsch
Lois Freske
David Toxopeus A6

FRANKLY
TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

"Niles football is awesome. We are so proud of you." A2

Niles beats South Christian 62 to 30 to clinch State finals berth B1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call Frankly at (269) 687-7702 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

"Now we are passing bills about bathrooms. We have two wars going on that are growing bigger each day. Let's get our priorities straight."

"Please drive slowly as the weather gets worse. I don't drive fast in the summer and won't during the winter. Don't tailgate."

"Niles football is awesome. We are so proud of you."

"The Vikings look good. Let's go all the way!"

"Win or lose we are so excited for our team to be heading to the championship game."

"Give thanks for what you have today. Things can turn pretty quickly in one's life. In a blink of an eye I lost it all. Friends and family helped me pick up the pieces."

"Lord, give us strength. Help our new leaders to make good decisions and help us on our path to a better future."

"My car and homeowners insurance has increased 30% since January. No accidents and no claims. I don't get it. I feel sorry for the Floridians, but I feel like I'm flipping their bill."

CORRECTION NOTICE

CASS COUNTY, Mich. -- The Cass County Sheriff's Office responded to a two-vehicle crash on November 20 at the intersection of Pokagon Highway and Daily Road.

The investigation shows that 28 year old Reid Joseph Walters of Cassopolis failed to yield the right-of-way to a vehicle and was carrying an 85-year-old passenger who was taken to St. Joe Medical for injuries sustained in this crash.

The initial accident report wrongfully stated Dylan Vantubberger, 24, of South Bend failed to yield and was carrying a passenger. The report has been corrected. We apologize for the error.

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Partly Cloudy	40% Chance Snow Showers	50% Chance Snow Showers	30% Chance Frozen Mix	50% Chance Rain Showers	30% Chance Frozen Mix
26° 22°	29° 26°	29° 23°	29° 23°	31° 26°	34° 29°

SHERIFF'S OFFICE CELEBRATES CORRECTIONS ACADEMY GRADUATES

COMMUNITY REPORT

BERRIEN COUNTY — Three Berrien County Sheriff's Deputies recently graduated from the Corrections Academy hosted by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies Hunter Kirk, Samuel Douglass and Bryan Elkins graduated on November 26, 2024, from the Corrections Academy. The four-week academy offers a comprehensive, interactive instruction program in various disciplines for jail deputies. Deputy Bryan Elkins was presented the Academic Excellence Award and Deputy Hunter Kirk was presented the Best Overall Performance Award.

Training topics include custody and security, defensive tactics, first aid, suicide awareness, fire safety and interpersonal communications. The academy, certified by the Michigan Sheriffs' Coordinating & Training Council, is an important element of providing the necessary skills for maintaining a safe, secure environment for jail staff, inmates and county residents.

"I want to congratulate each of these Deputies for their effort in completing this vital training. The skills learned at this academy will help them safely and effectively manage our inmate population," said Sheriff Chuck Heit. "The training helps our deputies develop and practice the tools necessary to be successful in this high stress environment."

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
From left: Deputy Hunter Kirk, Deputy Samuel Douglass and Deputy Bryan Elkins.

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SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Niles City Council bids farewell to outgoing members

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Niles community bid farewell to outgoing members of the Niles City Council Monday night.

John DiCostanzo and Amanda Dunnem received a round of applause after participating in their last council meeting as members of the Niles City Council. Their four-year terms have come to an end and neither DiCostanzo nor Dunnem will run for re-election. Jessica Nelson will replace DiCostanzo on the council after winning the seat in the Nov. 5 election and Sheila Koebel will replace Dunnem after winning her seat.

"I want to congratulate our new council member in the Fourth Ward, Jessica Nelson. (They) should be a great addition," DiCostanzo said. "I thank all of the regulars who attend these meetings and show a keen interest in what's going on in the city. I really appreciate you people, you keep us on our toes. I appreciate all the folks that I've served with that are still on the board and some of the past members."

A native of Long Island, New York, DiCostanzo and his wife and children moved to Niles in 1988, attracted by the cost of living. In 2012, DiCostanzo joined the city planning commission and has served on numerous boards ever since. In 2016, he became a member of city council at the recommendation of Tim Skalla following the sudden passing of councilmember Scott Clark. DiCostanzo will continue to serve on the planning commission.

"I saw a newspaper ad in the (Niles Daily Star)," DiCostanzo recalled. "The city was looking for commission members and committee members to fill boards and I just filled out an application. The application asked you what boards you'd like to be on and I got a call from the Community Development Director and he put me on the Planning Commission and I've been on the Planning Commission ever since."

DiCostanzo highlighted a number of council decisions he was proud of, including the groundbreaking and opening of Indeck, the sale of the historic Niles Post Office, the city choosing to allow for the establishment of marijuana businesses in Niles and more.

"I think the city has moved in a positive direction during the time I was a member," DiCostanzo said. "I can't take credit for much of it other than I participated in it."

Dunnem was elected to represent the Second Ward in 2020. She is the National Section Leader for CNAs with the National Hospice and Palliative Care Association and also served on the Michigan Home Care and Hospice Public Policy Committee.

"It has been a blessed four years," Dunnem said. "I very much enjoyed being with you guys here on the council. One of the things that I tell people most often is I really wish more people in the city understood just how great the city workers are that we have and how much they truly love the city and our volunteers. It just amazes me, so thank you. I will miss you guys. It is not goodbye, just see you later for a little bit.

"I appreciate those council members who truly look out for their constituents in their wards and not just their own agenda."

Mayor Nick Shelton thanked DiCostanzo and Dunnem for their years of service to the city.

"Councilmember Dunnem, you're awesome," Shelton said. "I'm so glad that you ran for council four years ago. It's just been such an absolute pleasure to serve with you. You're kind-hearted, you're just a beautiful person and I'm so thankful for all you've done for our communities the last four years. Councilmember DiCostanzo, you're the man. I just appreciate so much the discourse and debate and just your knowledge and appreciation for this community and all the work you've put forth, not only on the council but on the commission. You are a terrific council member, you're a terrific citizen and I just have really appreciated the opportunity to serve with you these last eight years. I just appreciate all you've done."

Former Dowagiac Deputy Chief passes away

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The Dowagiac community is in mourning following the passing of a prominent community member.

Retired Dowagiac Deputy Chief David "Toxy" Toxopeus passed away Saturday, Nov. 23 at the age of 56, according to the Dowagiac Police Department.

Deputy Chief Toxopeus started at the Dowagiac Police Department in October of 1994. During his time he was a patrol officer and was promoted to Detective in 1997. Toxopeus was promoted to Detective Sergeant in 2003, and was placed as commander of the newly formed Cass County Drug Enforcement Team (CCDET). Toxy was instrumental in the success of CCDET and helped build a strong unit that aggressively enforced narcotics within Cass County as well as worked on major crimes such as homicides and robberies, and still does today. In 2018, Toxy was promoted to the rank of Deputy Chief of Police. He

remained in that role until his retirement in April of 2022.

"Toxy served the community of Dowagiac and Cass County for 27 ½ years with dedication and honor," stated the Dowagiac Police Department in a Facebook post. "He was always available and would drop what he was doing to respond in a moment's notice when needed. He was a great leader and mentor to the officers he served with and has definitely left his mark on the history of the Dowagiac Police Department and Cass County. He could always be counted on to get the job done and give his all no matter what he was tasked with. He could also always be counted on to 'poke' the Michigan and Notre Dame fan fellow officers whenever his beloved Spartans would beat them.

"Although the last few years have been difficult, he was always willing and wanting to talk about what was going on with the department and the officers working here, until that was no longer possible," the post continued. "Toxy will be missed by his DPD family as well as his own family. We are happy that he is no longer in pain but very sad to lose our Brother and Friend. We are proud and honored to have served with Toxy and will keep his family in our thoughts and prayers."

SELECTS

Continued from page A1

a contract with McGhee with the goal of him starting shortly after the new year. The position was advertised to have a salary range of $110,000-$125,000.

McGhee has been the vice-president of development services at Abonmarche since 2010. He was owner of the Water Street Group in Benton Harbor from 2009-11 and was vice president of physical and business development for Cornerstone Alliance from 2004-09. He served with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation from 1998-2004.

He said Friday he believed he was the right fit for the job due to his experience with infrastructure, utilities and economic development and added that he has built relationships with other area leaders over the years. "I have a track record and am known in the area," he said.

He said some of the past projects he's most proud of are the Smart Park project in Cassopolis, the revitalization of downtown Allegan and securing land for the Harbor Shores development. "With the Smart Park, it was an idea in 2019 and by 2023 it was up and running," he said.

"I've been watching Buchanan for eight to 10 years," McGhee said Friday when asked about his views of Buchanan. "You have a real sense of community where people stick together and care. You have solid schools and the opportunity to build something. There are not too many communities with the natural resources you have."

"This could be a community where people want to live and have their business," he added. "You have the foundation with your quality of life, infrastructure and economic development opportunities to do some pretty good things for the next generations."

Monday's presentation centered on candidates' plans for infrastructure and economic development. McGhee talked about finding ways for the city to leverage its "world class resources" and "entrepreneurial friendly environment."

He spoke about the city's infrastructure needs and how to pay for those projects with grants and low interest loans as well as attracting developers interested in building new housing and opening new businesses. He wants to work on other goals such as improving neighborhoods and finding ways to keep young people from moving away.

"People ask me why I want to do this (be a city manager)," he noted. "I want to make the vision you have a reality, I want to be a part of it. You have a lot going on here."

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Opinion

The 'Out-ed' House

By RICH CAINS
Publisher, Leader Publications

Last week, South Carolina representative Nancy Mace filed a motion to ban newly elected Congresswoman Sarah McBride and any other transgender women from all women's bathrooms in the Capitol, claiming that McBride's very presence threatened the "safety and dignity" of her colleagues-to-be. "This is not okay," said Mace, who posted and shared posts about bathrooms on social media some 326 times within 72 hours last week. "I'm a survivor of rape, I'm a survivor of sexual abuse, and I'm not going to allow any man in any female private spaces. Period, end of story." Mace also filed a bill expanding her bathroom crusade to every federal facility, from museums through national parks to US Post Office branches.

Cains

As a father, I would not want a man to expose himself to my daughter in a women's restroom or locker room, nor would I want a man to expose himself to my son in a men's restroom or locker room for that matter. How do we prevent this? Does it make sense to pursue new laws that have no clear path of enforceability without first violating ones right to privacy protections expressly stated in at least five Amendments of the United States Constitution? There are indecent exposure charges that could possibly be enforceable if a biological identity is known, but are we really talking about charging a transgender person with indecent exposure for using the restroom they identify with? On the flipside, can a man suddenly decide he wants to identify as a woman and use a women's restroom today?

I understand the concerns that have been raised and there are some valid points being made by Mace, but what new law could possibly prevent a biologically born man, who now identifies as a woman, from using a women's restroom in a public building? Will Mace's law start requiring "paperwork" every time we leave the house entering public places just as the Nazis did? Will this eventually lead to strip searches before entering a restroom in a greasy spoon or Citgo to check for appropriate genitalia matching the properly assigned restroom? Should a gay man be allowed to use the men's room or a lesbian to use the ladies room? Where do bisexuals fit into all of this? What about crossdressers?

The child of Sonny and Cher, Chaz Bono, has openly transitioned from a biological female to a man. His beard is fuller than many men I know. His body build, his attire, his whole being is that of what most people would consider a typical human male, if there is such a thing. Would Congresswoman Mace deem it appropriate for Chaz to walk into the restroom she is currently occupying? The same question could be asked of House Speaker Johnson regarding some transgender females whose images cover popular beauty and glamour magazines.

The bottom line is a bad law requires more corrective bad laws, each held together with spit and tape….. amending and amending. Mace's law would be a lemon if it was an automobile and it would always be in the shop.

It wasn't too long ago that we had "colored only" restrooms, restaurants, drinking fountains and backseat-only bus rides for people of color. Looking back on these specific parts of our history, it is easy to see the sickness and ridiculousness of it. In fifty years, our society will look back on us with bewilderment or appreciation of the laws we created to help protect the diversity that has made our nation the Great American Melting Pot. Which will it be?

Ironically, the fact that Mace and McBride both have private bathrooms in their offices means the only people that the bill will actually hurt will be the nonelected transgender employees of the U.S. Capitol building, who apparently have been using the bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity with no issue.

The holidays - a time for others?

Thanksgiving, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Diwali and more! This time of the year we find ourselves reflecting over the last year, spending time with loved ones, and eating more than we can handle. I find the holiday season not only to be a time of looking at what we have to be thankful for but as a time to look at what others may not have. My church has a Thanksgiving meal they serve each year, to give anyone the opportunity to break bread with others for the holidays. Not only do we serve meals during the holiday season, but we serve meals each and every Wednesday. This becomes a regular for anyone that may be in need of a hot meal, a warm place to rest for a few hours or maybe even a place for them to reach out to others for a simple conversation. While we all prepared for Thanksgiving festivities, called all of the relatives, planned on who's going to pick up Aunt Jan from the airport, I hope everyone stopped for a moment to think about what we could do to help brighten someone else's Thanksgiving/holiday season. It's okay if you could not help serve a meal to the community; however, something as small as dropping off some canned goods to your local food pantry, or a place (church, community center, etc.) that serves a meal to others can go a long way in making this holiday season brighter. You can help be the reason someone else smiles, today!

Turnock

Peace and love to you all!

Joshua Turnock is a Niles graduate and a valued member of Leader Publications' Design Team.

NEWS

SITE

Continued from page A1

building to its nineteenth century style.

Nineteenth century one-room schools in this community typically contained a woodburning stove, woodbox, water bench, coat pegs, wooden blackboards and long rows of desks. One teacher often taught two grades. Lessons were in reading, writing, spelling, numbers, declamation and geography. The building received a historical marker in 1980 from the state's Michigan History Division.

For several years, the building was home to the Ferry Street Resource Center, which assists area residents in securing resources and to provide educational and life-enrichment programs and activities, with a goal of bridging existing educational, cultural and societal gaps that exist within the community.

A fire destroyed the majority of the structure with only the façade of the original school building being saved.

The façade was saved with the goal of preserving the remaining piece and incorporating it into a public space to memorialize the historic significance of this structure and create a community gathering location.

The Council previously approved funds to preserve the remaining structure in its current form and approved fundraising for the completion of the public space. Fundraising has not previously taken place because the City did not control the property. Long-term structure maintenance and grounds maintenance will be the responsibility of the City.

> "By approving the deed transfer for this area, I can move forward with plans to raise funds to create Ferry Street School Park, a memorial for the school with the potential to educate more about this important chapter in our history."
>
> — **Christina Arseneau**

Fourth Ward Councilmember Michael Thompson cast the dissenting vote, stating that the property will be the city's "money pit" as far as maintaining the property until a decision is made regarding its future.

"They got an insurance payout when the thing burned down right," Thompson said prior to the agenda item passing. "Why are we stuck with having to maintain this when they've been paid to take care of this?"

"We aren't stuck with maintaining it," said Mayor Nick Shelton in response. "We get to choose whether we want to make it city property or not."

The Ferry Street Resource Board approved the quit claim deed transferring ownership back to the City of Niles to facilitate fund raising and preservation.

"By approving the deed transfer for this area, I can move forward with plans to raise funds to create Ferry Street School Park, a memorial for the school with the potential to educate more about this important chapter in our history," said Niles History Executive Director Christina Arseneau.

In other business, council:

• Approved the renewal of the airport ground lease with James L. Martin of South Bend, Indiana for a five-year term expiring Dec. 31, 2029.

• Approved the renewal of the airport ground lease with Harold E. Brown, MD of Niles for a five year term expiring Dec. 31, 2029.

• Approved the renewal of the airport ground lease with Kenneth J. Kasner, of Edwardsburg for a five year term expiring Dec. 31, 2029.

• Approved the renewal of the airport ground lease with Garrott W. Elghammer, of Niles for a five year term expiring Dec. 31, 2029.

• Entered into a contract with Niles Public Schools for use of the Apple Festival Grounds for the 2025 Fourth of July Fireworks.

• Authorized the Utilities Department to purchase two data routers and accessories from Perceptive Controls, Inc. of Plainwell, Michigan in the amount of $3,976 for use by the Water Division, and charge the expense to their computer equipment and supplies budget.

• Authorized the city to purchase wireless communication services from Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless under contract through Michigan MiDeal, charge the expenses appropriately to the various departments.

• Accepted the quote in the amount of $26,682.03 from SHI International Corp of Somerset, New Jersey for the VPN, charging the expense to the General Fund and Utilities Department Computer Equipment and Supplies budgets.

• Accepted the quote in the amount of $73,200 from SHI International Corp of Somerset, New Jersey for a three year renewal of the computer security services contract, share the expense 60 percent to the General Fund and 40 percent to the Utilities, Computer and Equipment Supplies.

• Authorized the renewal of the annual maintenance subscription for the software modules from BS&A Software of Bath, Michigan, at a cost of $5,027, charging the expense to the Assessor's Office and Fire Department's Building Division.

• Authorized the emergency repair to the Service Center access control system at a cost of $6,200 from FSS Technologies, LLC of Ypsilanti, Michigan and charged the expense to the Utilities Department Water and Electric Divisions.

• Authorized the purchase of three hot dipped galvanized aeration basin air drops at a cost of $9,983 from Fab-N-Weld of Berrien Springs, Michigan for use at the Waste Water Treatment Plant and charge the expense to the Utilities Department Wastewater Division, Machinery and Equipment - Old.

• Authorized the Utilities Department to extend the Mowing and Grounds Maintenance contract with MAAC Property Services of Niles, Michigan in the amount of $28,200, charging the expense to the respective properties.

• Authorized the Utilities Department to rent a hydro excavation unit for a third year from MacAllister Machinery Company, Inc. of Novi, Michigan under the Michigan MiDeal pricing of $164,400, charge the expense to the Water Division.

• Approved the emergency purchase in the amount of $11,250 from FSS Technologies, LLC of Ypsilanti, Michigan by the Utilities Department for upgrades to their fire and security alarm system at the Walter Filtration Plant with the expense being charged to the Water Division - Assets category.

• Accepted the quote in the amount of $18,534.24 from SiteOne Landscaping Supply of South Bend, Indiana for DuraEdge infield mix and DuraEdge topdressing for use at the Tyler Fields softball complex and pay for it from the dedicated cash maintenance account for Tyler Fields.

• Awarded a CDBG Home Repair Program contract in the amount of $10,691 to Airlux of Niles for the replacement of the HVAC system at 460 S. St. Joseph, Niles, MI with the expense being paid for by area foundations.

• Awarded a CDBG Home Repair Program contract to Future Construction of Watervliet, Michigan in the amount of $12,500 for the replacement of the roof at 1340 Oak St., Niles, with the expense being paid for by area foundations.

• Authorized the purchase of office furniture from Michigan Office Environments of Kalamazoo, Michigan at a MiDeal contract price of $7,408.24 for the Finance Department with the cost shared between the Utility Department and the General Fund.

Niles Daily Star

ADMINISTRATIVE
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COMICS & PUZZLES

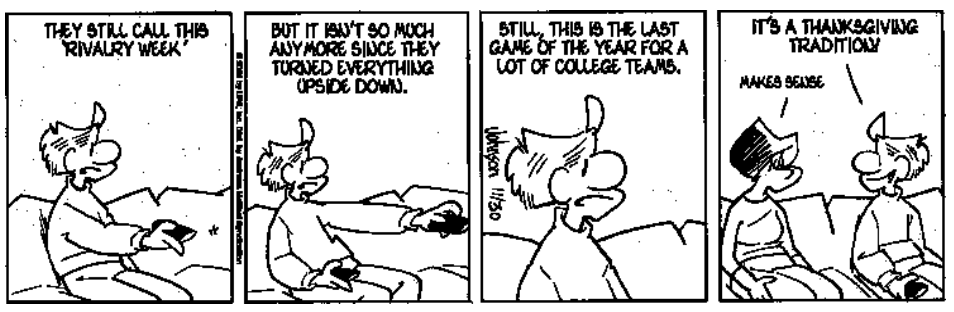
ADAM

MAN. I'M WRITING SO WELL TODAY!
GREAT!
KEEP IT GOING! I'LL TRY TO BE QUIET IN THE KITCHEN.
NOW IT'S TOO QUIET.
I'LL CLATTER SOME DISHES AROUND OCCASIONALLY.

ALLEY OOP

I'M HEADED BACK TO THE 21ST CENTURY, WEIRD MARY. ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY HERE?
YEAH, I'M STARTING TO GET THE HANG OF THE STONE AGE.
AND I REMEMBER YOUR MOTTO: "EVERYTHING IS DANGEROUS, AND DON'T TALK TO SPORRK."
THAT'S RIGHT!
HAVE I TOLD YOU GUYS ABOUT CRYPTOROCK? IT'S SO MUCH MORE SECURE THAN...
JUST KEEP WALKING AND DON'T TURN AROUND. HE'LL TIRE HIMSELF OUT.

ARLO & JANIS


THEY STILL CALL THIS 'RIVALRY WEEK'
BUT IT ISN'T SO MUCH ANYMORE SINCE THEY TURNED EVERYTHING UPSIDE DOWN.
STILL, THIS IS THE LAST GAME OF THE YEAR FOR A LOT OF COLLEGE TEAMS.
IT'S A THANKSGIVING TRADITION!
MAKES SENSE

BIG NATE

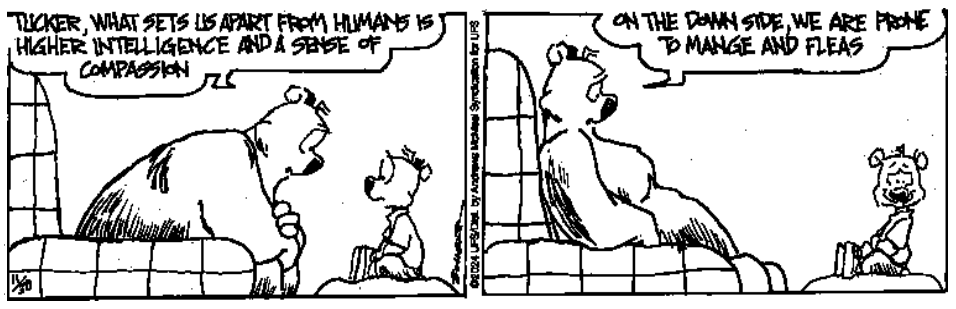
"OH, NO! WHAT HAPPENED TO MARY?"
"SHE'S DEAD!"
"SHE COULDN'T STOP VAPING! NOW LOOK AT HER!"
"TAKE IT FROM THE KIDS OF P.S. 38: VAPING CAN COST YOU YOUR LIFE!"
"BUT WAIT! MARY'S MAKING AN AMAZING RECOVERY!"
CUT!

BORN LOSER

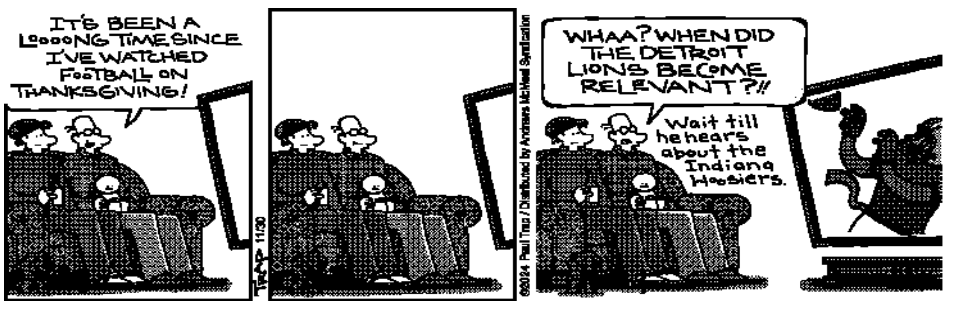
MR. O'HARA DOESN'T MAKE HATTIE RAKE THE LEAVES!
IS THAT SO? WELL, MR. O'HARA DOESN'T PAY YOU YOUR ALLOWANCE EVERY WEEK!
NEITHER DO YOU!

FRANK & ERNEST

GRIZZWELLS


TUCKER, WHAT SETS US APART FROM HUMANS IS HIGHER INTELLIGENCE AND A SENSE OF COMPASSION
ON THE DOWN SIDE, WE ARE PRONE TO MANGE AND FLEAS

THATABABY


IT'S BEEN A LOOOONG TIME SINCE I'VE WATCHED FOOTBALL ON THANKSGIVING!
WHAA? WHEN DID THE DETROIT LIONS BECOME RELEVANT?!!
Wait till he hears about the Indiana Hoosiers.

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YOU WANT OMAHA STEAKS
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You want Omaha Steaks.
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4 Air-Chilled Boneless Chicken Breasts (4 oz.)
4 Boneless Pork Chops (5 oz.)
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4 Caramel Apple Tartlets (4 oz.)
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$37 VALUE
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Ask for your 8 FREE burgers with offer 77318GFG
Savings shown over aggregated single item base price. 8 free 6 oz. burgers will be sent to each shipping address that includes SKU 77318. Limit 2 on select items at these exclusive prices. While supplies last. Items may be substituted due to inventory limitations. Standard shipping rates will be applied and are subject to change. Minimum purchase and other restrictions may apply. Some products may not be available for sale in your area. Sales are subject to OmahaSteaks.com/terms-of-use0SI. Expires 12/31/24. | 24M6729 | Omaha Steaks, LLC

SODOKU PUZZLE

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

		5		2		9		
6			4	5	9			
	4							8
					7			
7	2			9			6	3
			5					
4							8	
			9	4	6			1
		2		7		6		

MODERATELY CONFUSED

REALITY CHECK

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

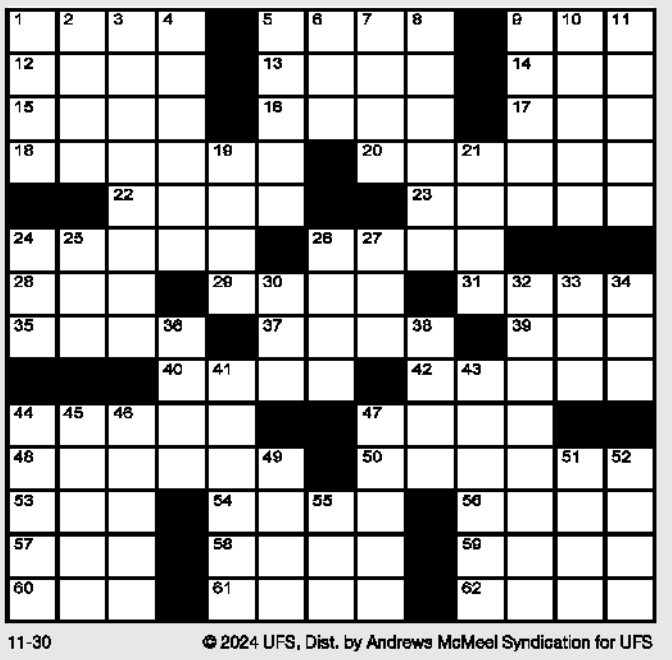
ACROSS

1 News
5 Elaborate party
9 Distress signal
12 Golden- —
13 Killer whale
14 Pointer
15 18-wheeler
16 At hand
17 Actress — MacGraw
18 Annoyed
20 Pill
22 Kitten calls
23 Napped leather
24 Costly fur
26 Overtake
28 Snow cone base
29 Drizzle
31 Old Russian ruler (var.)
35 Salon service
37 Joins
39 Stalemate
40 Under the covers
42 Rains icy rain
44 Bowl over
47 "— Free"
48 Works of fiction
50 Taking more time
53 "Give — — rest!"
54 Enticement
56 Church calendar
57 2,000 pounds
58 Sign
59 Falls behind
60 Skill
61 Fireplace fuel
62 Tints

DOWN

1 Winged insect
2 Pointed arch
3 Recall
4 Nonsense
5 Slugger Barry —
6 Exist
7 "Begone!"
8 Pester
9 Not at all original
10 Lubricated
11 Ill will
19 Fancy pitcher
21 Head-and-shoulders statue
24 Drink
25 One-pip card
26 Mottled
27 Plus
30 Shock's partner
32 Flattened fish
33 Trouble
34 Dwelling (abbr.)
36 Place of confusion
38 "Go!"
41 Shout
43 Golf legend — Palmer
44 Actress — Ekberg
45 Engine
46 — -garde
47 Mixture
49 Japanese sport
51 Proceed slowly
52 Noted flag maker
55 Rock's — Speedwagon

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



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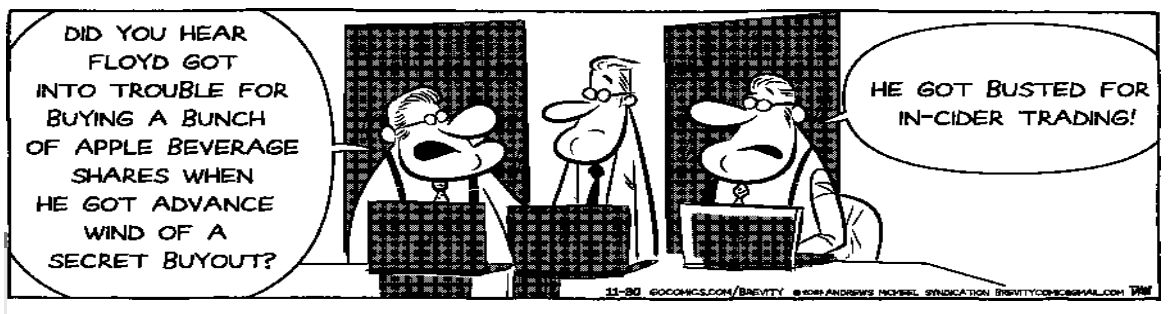
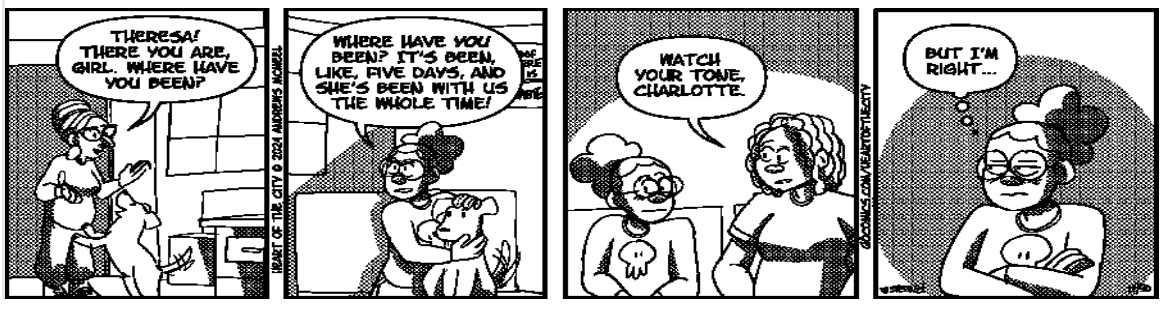
BREVITY


DID YOU HEAR FLOYD GOT INTO TROUBLE FOR BUYING A BUNCH OF APPLE BEVERAGE SHARES WHEN HE GOT ADVANCE WIND OF A SECRET BUYOUT?
HE GOT BUSTED FOR IN-CIDER TRADING!
11-30 GOCOMICS.COM/BREVITY © 2024 ANDREWS MCMEEL SYNDICATION BREVITYCOMIC@GMAIL.COM

HEART OF THE CITY


THERESA! THERE YOU ARE, GIRL. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? IT'S BEEN, LIKE, FIVE DAYS, AND SHE'S BEEN WITH US THE WHOLE TIME!
WATCH YOUR TONE, CHARLOTTE.
BUT I'M RIGHT...
HEART OF THE CITY © 2024 ANDREWS MCMEEL
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DEATH NOTICES

Barbara Castello, 89, of Stevensville, passed away November 25, 2024. Funeral services will be held on December 3, 2024, at 11:00AM, with a visitation to start an hour prior. www.BrownFuneralhomeNiles.com

Patricia Lou Stroud, 71, of Dowagiac, died Monday, November 25, 2924. A celebration of life gathering will be held privately. Arrangements entrusted to Clark Chapel, Dowagiac. The full obituary may be viewed at www.clarkch.com.

OBITUARIES

Arthur Middleton

July 26, 1935
- November 19, 2024

Arthur E. Middleton, 89, of Dowagiac, passed away on Tuesday evening, November 19, 2024, at Cass County Medical Care Facility in Cassopolis.

He was born on July 26, 1935, in Harper, Kansas, the son of the late Arthur D. and Maude (Graves) Middleton.

On July 23, 1955, Art was united in marriage to the former Joretta Barnum. He was employed by Clark Equipment for 31 years, until his retirement in 1989.

Surviving are his four children - Bob (Melissa) Middleton, Karen Clark, Barb Etzel and Caryl Fogarty; seven grandchildren - Rhonda (Steve) Longley, Cynthia Ropp, Alexandria Maggert, Kimberly Middleton, Kaitlyn Middleton, Danielle Etzel and Jordan Pender; and eight great-grandchildren.

A service to celebrate Art's life will be held at 2:00 PM on Saturday, December 7, at Clark Chapel and Cremation Services - Starks Family Funeral Homes, 405 Center St, Dowagiac, where friends may visit with the family from 1:00 PM until the time of service. Pastor Boyd Saylor of Keeler Church of God will officiate. Memorial contributions in Art's name may be directed to Caring Circle Hospice. Please visit Art's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave condolences to his family at www.clarkch.com.

Philip Crawford

March 16, 1941
- November 23, 2024

Philip Henry Crawford, 83, of Dowagiac, passed away peacefully on Saturday, November 23, 2024 at Ascension Borgess Hospital in Kalamazoo. The family will celebrate Phil's life with a memorial service held at 11am, Sunday, December 1, 2024 at Glenwood Seventh-day Adventist Church, 51089 Glenwood Rd., Dowagiac, Pastor Harry Rogers officiating. Interment will be held privately. Memorial contributions may be given to the Glenwood SDA church. Arrangements entrusted to Clark Chapel, Dowagiac 269-782-2135. Those wishing to leave an online condolence for the family may do so at www.clarkch.com. Phil was born March 16, 1941 in Lawton, MI to William and Myrtle (Bakeman) Crawford. On May 20, 1962 he married Jennie Mullard at Glenwood SDA in Dowagiac. They lived and farmed the land with their family, a tradition passed down through the generations since 1868. Phil loved to farm, but not as much as he enjoyed spending time with his family, especially on vacation. He was a lifelong member of the Glenwood SDA church community and served the community with a grateful heart. He will be remembered as a loving and dedicated husband, father, grandfather (aka Pop) and humble servant of the Lord. Phil will be missed by his wife of 62 years, Jennie (Mullard) Crawford; his children, Sallie (Steven) Baerg, Susan (Erik) Oosterwal, Sandra (Scott) Yore, and William (Katrina) Crawford; his grandchildren, Bruce (Carlie) Baerg, Missie (Randy) Hoenes, Mindie (Jim) Kazlauskas, Erik-Philip (Kayla) Oosterwal, Matthew (Kate) Oosterwal, Scott Yore, Jr., Sean Yore, and William Crawford; his great grandchildren, Gus, Maverick, Colton, Easton, Josie, Jessie, Bailey, Gideon, and Sophia Grace. He is preceded in death by his great granddaughter, Maggie Sue; his siblings, Carol Nieman, and Gene Crawford; and his parents.

Dathel Duffel

March 12, 1942
- November 20, 2024

Dathel Louise (Baker) Duffel, 82, of Niles, Michigan, formerly of Berrien Springs, MI. went home to be with Jesus on November 20, 2024 in South Bend Indiana after a long fight with dementia.

Dathel was born in Lepanto, Arkansas on March 12, 1942 to the late Elisha D. Baker and Cynthia Rosetta (Archer) Baker. She grew up in Leachville, AR where she met Robert Wayne Duffel, the love of her life and were married on January 12, 1961. They started their family and in 1968, moved to Michigan and raised five children.

Dathel had many professions throughout her life. She was a school bus driver for the Berrien Springs Public School System for eight years. She enjoyed participating in the annual school bus rodeo competition where she won several awards. During this time, she also worked at Pennellwood Resort as the laundry and housekeeping supervisor. In later years, she worked at Riveridge Nursing Home as the laundry supervisor until she retired after 20 years.

She attended the Niles Church of God, where she established and directed the food pantry. Later in life she attended Arden United Methodist Church, where her son Lanny Duffel served as Pastor.

Dathel enjoyed sewing and quilting, she accomplished her goal of creating and gifting a personalized quilt for each of her children and grandchildren. She used her hobby to bless many nursing home residents with specialized bags for walkers and wheelchairs. She treasured family gatherings, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas where she created the tradition of playing bingo using dried beans as the card markers, that were then used to throw at each winner. She also found great joy in spending time with her nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. She loved to laugh and found many opportunities for humor in life.

Dathel is survived by her husband of 63 years, Robert Duffel of South Bend, IN; children Angela (William) Shembarger of Niles, MI; Sheila Engler of North Augusta, SC; Bryan Duffel of Buchanan, MI; Tina (Terry) Woods of South Bend, IN; and Lanny (Denise) Duffel of Berrien Springs, MI. Nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her parents, Elisha and Rosetta Baker, her siblings Earline Smitherman, Anna Mae Dennison, Lena Bell Coleman, Leon Baker and Leo Baker. Step siblings Thelma Solomon, Ethel Parker and Cliff Baker.

Funeral Services will be held Saturday, November 30 at 1pm at Arden Grace Church in Berrien Springs with Rev. Dan Smitherman officiating. A visitation time an hour prior to the service from 12:00-1:00pm will be available for friends and family. Memorial donations can be made in Dathel's honor to Arden Grace Church. Burial to follow at a later date with family after cremation at Rosehill Cemetery in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Allred Funeral Home in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Wayne Hentsch

February 5, 1935
- November 21, 2024

Wayne William Hentsch, 89, of Niles passed away on Thursday November 21, 2024 after a sudden decline related to his extended battle with cancer.

Wayne was born to William and Leona (Parker) Hentsch. His mother died 5 days after his birth and Wayne was raised by his Aunt Frieda on the family farm in Mokena, IL for the first 13 years of his life after which, his step-mother Clara Hentsch became his strong mothering supporter.

Wayne was active on the Niles High School Track team where he set time records and was a standout. After graduating from Niles High School in the class of 1953 he was employed by Kawneer until they moved away from Niles. Wayne was then employed by Old Kent Bank (currently Fifth/Third Bank) for 25 years until his retirement. He managed the maintenance for 23 branches and one of his favorite tasks was setting up Christmas trees in each branch. While still a young man, Wayne joined the Army Reserves obtaining the rank of Sergeant and served until he was discharged in 1962.

On September 24, 1960 Wayne married at St. Paul's Lutheran Church the love of his life, Barbara Uselton who has predeceased him. They were blessed with a son Stephen Hentsch of Edwardsburg who survives and a granddaughter Amanda Hentsch of Grand Rapids.

Wayne was a faithful and devoted member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church for 75 years where he enjoyed being on the Dart Ball team and the fellowship the church offered. He had many hobbies including gardening, fall color trips to Maine and Antiquing with Barbara. Their garden on Oak Street drew many visitors. Wayne loved Jazz and would daily play selections from his extensive vinyl collection. He was an avid Detroit Lions and Tigers fan.

Wayne was blessed to have the loving support during these last years of his "Angels" Dick and Sue Rossow of Buchanan and also sister-in-law and brother-in-law, whose constant care allowed him to enjoy activities at the Senior Center of Buchanan where he was a regular and made many friends. He was blessed to spend his last years at Woodland Terrace where the staff and residents became his "special" family providing him with opportunity to nurture his indoor greenhouse and take care of other residents' plants while working his many jigsaw puzzles.

Other family include a brother William Hentsch who no longer survives, a sister Karen (Barry) Ludwig and nieces Aubrey and Kelsay and their families as well as several great nephews and niece

Services for Wayne will be held Monday, December 2nd, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, at 11:00 A.M. An hour of visitation will be held prior from 10:00-11:00 A.M.

Memorial contributions for Wayne may be made to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1340 Sycamore St, Niles, MI 49120.

Memories of Wayne may be left at BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

Lois Freske

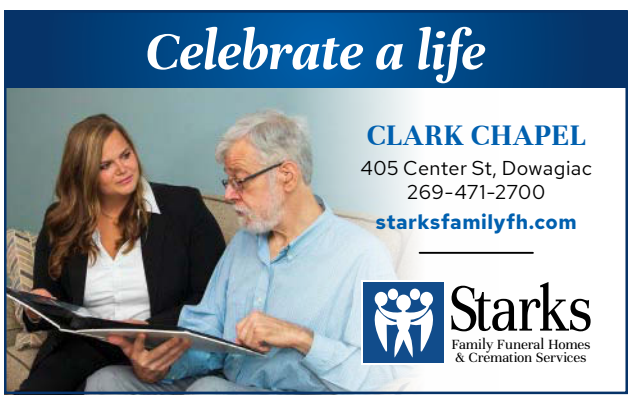
August 26 1929
- November 15, 2024

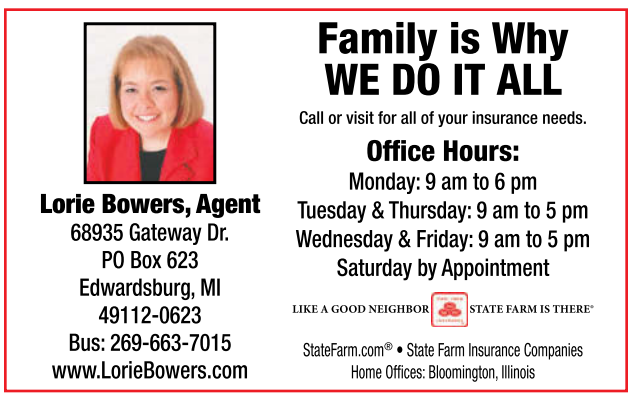
Lois Eunice Freske, 95 of Niles, died Friday, November 15 at Westwoods of Niles. Lois was born August 26, 1929 in Berwyn Illinois to Richard and Clara (Behnke) Klebbe. She married Rober W. Freske Sr., September 9, 1951 and moved to Niles in 1958.

Lois met the love of her life in high school, graduating from Luther Institute in 1947, where she was active in choir and other club activities. After high school, Lois was a secretary for JR Milling Co. until Robert returned from his service in the Korean War. After her children were in school, she worked at Lakeland Hospital (formerly Pawating) in Niles. Lois was an active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, having served in the Altar Guild and many years in the choir. She was a member of Beta Sigma Phi sorority and participated in bowling leagues, winning several championships. Lois enjoyed watching her children and grandchildren's sporting events.

Lois is survived by her children, Grace (John) Parshall, Judy (Ken) Hoese, Robert (Julie) Freske, Kathy (Larry) McLaughlin, Richard (Cyndi) Freske; grandchildren, Andrea (Chris Moore) Hoese, John Brian (Melissa) Parshall, Kaitlyn (Mark) Skinner, Greg (Brean) Hoese, Will (Sydney) Freske, Jacob Freske, Evan McLaughlin, Matthew (Anne) McLaughlin, Derrick Freske, Michael Freske, Stephanie Freske; great

See OBITUARIES, Page A7

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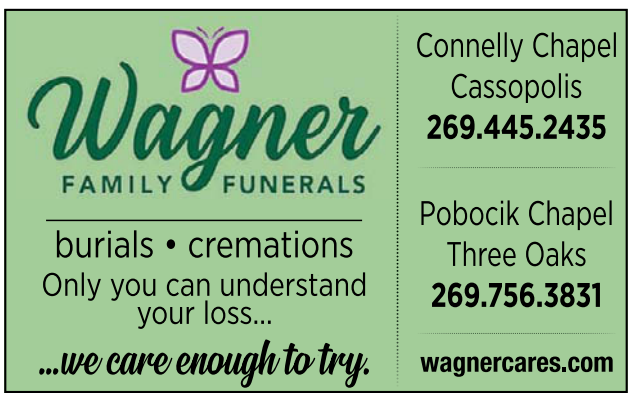
Variety of Vendors - Door Prizes - Baked Goods
Sloppy Joe Sandwich Boxed Lunch
Buchanan Area Senior Center
810 Rynearson St., Buchanan, www.thebasc.org



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CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

W	O	R	D		B	A	S	H		S	O	S
A	G	E	R		O	R	C	A		T	I	P
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SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

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4	9	6	2	1	3	7	8	5
8	5	7	9	4	6	2	3	1
3	1	2	8	7	5	6	9	4

SERVE

Continued from page A1

we're going to accomplish a lot and in the process enjoy what we're doing, focus on the positive and build better communication."

Nelson, the VP Global Business Operations at Fluent Commerce, represented the fourth ward from 2018 to 2022 and is looking forward to getting back to work.

"When you care about the community as much as I do and my whole family does, you have to put your money where your mouth is and actually show up day after day and do the hard work," they said. "So for me, that's what council is. It's showing up day after day after day and helping make the decisions that keep our community running and thriving."

Boggs, the longest-serving member of the city council, will represent the first ward for a seventh term. McAfee, who has worked as a public servant on and off since 1972 at both the state and local levels, has returned to represent the third ward for a fourth term. Not only was Monday the night McAfee was sworn in to represent the third ward once again but it was also her "39th" birthday.

"It's fantastic," McAfee said. "Those are great guys up there and I've always been a part of Niles and working to benefit the Niles community. I just love Niles."

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

OBITUARIES

Continued from page A6

grandchildren, Emily, Hannah, Molly, Annabelle, Hudson, Dylan, Leighton, Henley, Mack, Jori, Jett and Baby Freske.

Lois was preceded in death by her husband on October 9, 1984, her parents, her brother Richard Klebbe, her sisters, Carole Klebbe and Infant Grace.

Services will be held Friday, November 22, 11:00a.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran church, 1340 Sycamore Street, Niles, with gathering one hour prior. Burial will follow at Siverbrook Cemetery.

Friends may call from 6:00p.m. until 8:00p.m. Thursday, November 21, in Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services at 615 E. Main Street Niles.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Paul's Lutheran Church or The Brian Parker Memorial Foundation.

Thank you to Westwoods staff, Gentiva Hospice and Berrien County Cancer Services for all their care of our mom.

David Toxopeus

July 11, 1968
- November 23, 2024

David "Toxy" Alan Toxopeus, 56, passed away on Saturday, November 23, 2024, in South Bend, Indiana.

David was born on July 11, 1968 in Kalamazoo, Michigan to the late Fred Toxopeus and Harriett (Flannery) Toxopeus.

Left to cherish the memory of David are his children; Devin (Kayla) Toxopeus, Mykal (Cortney) Toxopeus, and Douglas Rockett; grandchildren, Liam, Archer, Araya, MJ, and Sutton, and two sisters.

A true family man, David cherished every moment spent with his children and grandchildren. His love for his family was unmatched and was on display at every sporting event for his three children. He loved having family cookouts, family vacations to Marco Island, and passionately cheering on the Michigan State Spartans.

Professionally, Toxy dedicated his life to law enforcement, serving the community of Dowagiac and Cass County for 27 1/2 years with honor and distinction. He began his career at the Cassopolis Police Department in 1990 and moved to the Dowagiac Police Department in 1994. Toxy went on to lead the newly formed Cass County Drug Enforcement Team (CCDET) in 2003 and played an instrumental role in its success. In 2018, he was promoted to Deputy Chief where he would remain until his retirement in 2022. Deputy Chief Toxy left a mark of excellence as a leader and a mentor that continues to inspire the officers he served with.

David's life was a beacon of dedication, love, and an unshakeable sense of duty that will be forever remembered.

In keeping with David's wishes, there will be no services held at this time.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home.

Photos, condolences, and memories may be left for David's family at www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

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BASKETBALL

Dowagiac boys fall to Vicksburg 76-47 in season opener

SCOTT HASSINGER
LEADER
PUBLICATIONS
Dowagiac senior guard Jamal Williams (1) drives past Vicksburg's Mitchell Beyer (4) in the first half of Tuesday's season opener.

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications Contributor

VICKSBURG — Dowagiac ran into a hot-shooting Vicksburg squad and dropped its boys' basketball opener on the road 76-47 Tuesday.

Danum Hunt's Chieftains are now 0-1. Vicksburg improves to 2-0, including a decisive 72-54 win over Monday over Wolverine Conference foe Otsego.

Vicksburg hustled out to a quick 11-0 lead to start the non-league contest. Chase Frazier's layup gave Dowagiac its first basket nearly four minutes into the game and the Chieftains trailed the Bulldogs 26-11 at the end of one quarter.

The Bulldogs' transition game led to several fast-break buckets and at times it seemed like the home team just couldn't miss a shot in the first half.

Vicksburg outscored Dowagiac 27-12 in the second quarter and built its advantage to 30-points, 53-23, by halftime.

Vicksburg, which knocked down 23-of-39 shots from the floor in the opening half, outscored Dowagiac 11-6 in the third stanza to build a commanding 64-29 advantage entering the fourth quarter.

The Bulldogs finished the night shooting 33-of-55 from the floor (60 percent) and 8-of-12 (67 percent) at the foul stripe.

"Vicksburg shot the ball very well and against a team like that you can't afford to dig yourself the kind of hole that we did to start things off. They got in a good rythmn immediately. We were contesting their shots but there's not much you can do when they are falling," Hunt said."Our kids began to relax a bit more in the second half and began to let the offense come to them."

See OPENER, Page B2

FOOTBALL

NILES BEATS SOUTH CHRISTIAN 62 TO 30 TO CLINCH
STATE FINALS BERTH

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications Contributor

THREE RIVERS — As the song 'Celebration' by Kool and The Gang blared over the sound system at Armstrong Field in Three Rivers Saturday, Nov. 23, the Niles Vikings' football team and community celebrated a 62-30 Division 4 semifinal win over Grand Rapids South Christian.

No. 9-ranked Niles (12-1) advanced to Friday's state championship at Ford Field in Detroit to face No. 3 Goodrich (12-1) at 12:30 p.m.

It will be Niles first-ever appearance in the state finals.

Goodrich beat defending champion Harper Woods 28-14 in Saturday's other semifinal.

Scot Shaw's Vikings relied on its high-powered Flex-Bone offense and opportunistic defense to down the Sailors, last year's state runners-up.

South Christian (8-5) recovered a Niles fumble and took a quick 7-0 lead on Jesse VanDeGreind's 28-yard TD dash. Wyatt Sall booted the PAT for the Sailors.

"I was worried about stopping them (South Christian) but as it turned out they couldn't stop us. I just told our kids to take a deep breath. We've been down before and we just played a great game and battled back," said Shaw, who spent 19 seasons at Three Rivers as head coach and lost to South Christian in the state playoffs his first year there in 1986.

Niles responded well and got two scores of its own to lead the Sailors 16-7 after one quarter.

Peyton Gordon ran 17 yards for Niles' first score and Sam Rucker added the two-point conversion for a 8-7 Vikings' lead.

Junior Ward Cheney, starting inside linebacker, intercepted a Vis pass deflected by Sam Rucker at the Vikings' 20-yard line on South Christian's next drive.

Niles capitalized five plays later with Alex Anderson galloping 10 yards to paydirt and Vikings' quarterback Talen Bennett completed the conversion pass to Max Rucker.

Vis' nine-yard TD pass to Owen Burgess with 6:32 left in the second quarter pulled South Christian within two points (16-14). Austin Burgess booted the Sailors' PAT.

Niles responded with three late second-quarter TDs to boost its lead to 38-14 at halftime.

After suffering what appeared to be a knee injury, Sam Rucker was carried to the Niles' sideline. But the star senior tailback returned moments later and returned a Sailors' kickoff 91 yards for a Vikings' TD. Gordon ran in the conversion.

Niles' next score was set up by an interception by Dane Asmus.

"That interception was crazy. I dropped back into the flats and saw the ball and picked it off. It was energetic and definitely a game changer," Asmus said.

Bennett would connect with his 6-foot-7 junior tight end Brenden Olsen for a nine-yard TD catch on fourth down.

Gordon added the final Vikings' TD of the half on a five-yard dash.

"Sam's kickoff return was pretty big in a semifinal game

See STATE, Page B2

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Alex Anderson (6) from Niles scores a touchdown for the Vikings in the first half.

VOLLEYBALL

Buchanan's Tibbles signs with SMC

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Isabella Tibbles of Buchanan High School, Krush Volleyball Club and Southwest Volleyball Club has signed her NJCAA Letter of Intent to play volleyball in the 1st Source Bank Fieldhouse for Head Coach Jenny Nate and the Roadrunners.

Coach Nate said of Tibbles, "Isabella is a scrappy, quick, smart attacker who can hit from any spot on the net and is a great defensive player. She is a true teammate who is a positive leader on and off the court and plays to win. Izzy is First Team All Conference, exudes positive energy, hustle, and can place the ball well; she comes from a strong Buchanan Team who just had another great season as well as high-level club experience at Krush and this year at Southwest during her high school career which will have her ready to hit the court at the college level. We are excited to welcome Isabella to the SMC Volleyball Team."

See TIBBLES, Page B2

BASKETBALL

Shorthanded Niles falls 44-42 in overtime to pesky Three Rivers

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications Contributor

THREE RIVERS — The boys' basketball season got off to a shaky start for defending Wolverine Conference champion Niles in a 44-42 overtime loss Monday at Three Rivers.

The Vikings were without three players, who are members of the Niles football

See FALLS, Page B2

SCOTT HASSINGER | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Brayden Favors (1) from Niles has his shot contested by Max Burg (50) and Jace Gray (5) from Three Rivers Monday in the first half.

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Southwest Michigan well represented on MHSFCA All-Region teams

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Michigan High School Football Coaches Association has announced its 2024 All-Regional teams in advance of the state semifinals this weekend.

Southwest Michigan is well represented on the team, especially in Division 4 with Niles, which faced off against the Martians of Goodrich in the state finals Friday, having four players receiving honors.

Edwardsburg, who was eliminated by the Vikings in the district championship game three weeks ago, had a pair of players selected.

In Division 6, Buchanan had six players selected by the coaches for the postseason honor, while Brandywine had three players named to the squad.

Players were not the only ones recognized as Niles' Scott Shaw was named Coach of the Year in Region 4.

Division 4

Niles – Sam Rucker, senior RB; Paul Hess, senior LB; Brandon Hamilton, junior OL; Brenden Olsen, junior DB

Edwardsburg – Walker Karafa, senior DL; Oscar Morris, senior LB

Division 6

Buchanan – Lucas Zeiger, junior OL; Tyler Baker, senior WR; Owen Thompson, DL; Gabe Tompkins, senior LB; Ryan Hickok, junior LB; Brody Reed, junior DB

Brandywine – Tommy Killelea, senior OL; Kaeden Warfield, junior RB; Carter Sobecki, senior LB

OPENER

Continued from page B1

Vicksburg also owned a decisive 34-21 rebounding advantage against Dowagiac.

Balanced scoring was a big factor for the Bulldogs as well with three players reaching double digits, including 20 points apiece from senior Jordan Diekman and junior Mitchell Beyer, while Anthony Marchese added 14 and Lucas Johnson seven.

Marchese also had six rebounds and Diekman added six boards to go with four assists.

Dowagiac was led in scoring by Isaiah Fitchett with 27 points, including five three pointers. The Chieftains' 6-foot-0 guard/forward made all four of his free-throw attempts as well.

"Isaiah shot the ball really well for us tonight. He knocked down a few threes for us too," Hunt added.

Jamal Williams and Frazier both added six points each for Dowagiac and Brayden Diaz finished with five.

Hunt was also pleased with what he saw out of some of his younger players on his roster that he was able to rotate into the ballgame.

"I have five returners but I was able to get some of the younger guys some experience tonight. We will keep working and its early in the season. I believe with hard work we will get where we want to be with this group," Hunt added.

Randy Small, a member of the Basketball Coaches of Michigan's Hall of Fame after winning two state championships at Schoolcraft, was pleased with his team's performance.

> "I believe with hard work we will get where we want to be with this group."
> — Danum Hunt

"We want to see if we can play fast, but if we can't we will slow things down. Right now we have to get better in our half-court game. The kids are working hard and we shot the ball very well tonight, especially in the first half. We are learning to play the game better fundamentally. I thought our length caused Dowagiac some problems on the glass tonight," Small said.

VICKSBURG 76, DOWAGIAC 47

At Vicksburg

DOWAGIAC (47): Jamal Williams 6, Isaiah Fitchett 27, Kaleb Smith 3, Brayden Diaz 5, Chase Frazier 6. Totals 17 6-7 47.

VICKSBURG (76): Hunter Ambs 2, Grant Balazs 2, Mitchell Beyer 20, Donnie Yant 2, Ben Johnson 7, Austin Androsky 4, Jordan Diekman 20, Anthony Marchese 14, Brady Young 1, Tyler Vallier 4. Totals 33 8-12 76.

Dowagiac 11 23 39 47

Vicksburg 25 53 64 76

3-point baskets: Dowagiac 7 (Fitchett 5, Williams 1, Diaz 1), Vicksburg 4 (Beyer 3, Diekman 1). Total fouls: Dowagiac 9, Vicksburg 9. Records: Dowagiac 0-1, Vicksburg 1-0

TIBBLES

Continued from page B1

Coach Shelly Bender added, "Izzy's dedication and perseverance over the past four years at Buchanan Volleyball have truly exemplified the spirit of hard work and commitment, leading her to achieve her goal of earning a college volleyball scholarship at SMC! We are very proud of her!"

Tibbles is the second member of the 2025 SMC Volleyball recruiting class, joining Meah Evans of Constantine as new players on the Roadrunners squad.

SMC Volleyball finished the 2024 season with a winning record of 22-16, including a win over the undefeated and nationally-ranked McHenry County Scots. The Roadrunners were 7-5 in the MCCAA Western Conference, qualifying for the Great Lakes District Tournament for the third consecutive year, advancing in the bracket twice. Individual Roadrunners earned seven conference and regional awards, including All-Freshman Team, All-Conference Honorable Mention, All-Conference Second Team, All-Conference First Team, All-MCCAA Team and All-Region Team.

STATE

Continued from page B1

and the momentum shifted greatly with those three second-quarter touchdowns," Shaw said.

Hess scored from one yard out then added the conversion run to increase Niles' lead to 46-14 with 6:50 left in the third quarter.

"Stopping them (Sailors) on their first possession of the third quarter was exactly what we talked about at halftime and then taking one down and scoring ourselves was key," Shaw said. "We told our kids to come out and play their best half and not let something that happened in the first half get away from us."

Vis' 46-yard TD toss to Burgess and a conversion toss to Bryce Kenyon made it 46-22 at the end of the stanza.

Sam Rucker crashed over the Sailors' goal line at the 11:48 mark of the fourth period. Hess added the conversion run for a 54-22 Vikings' lead.

Vis' 15-yard scoring pass to Burgess with 11:17 to go and another conversion toss to Kenyon capped the Sailors' scoring.

Gordon's 23-yard TD sprint and Sam Rucker's conversion run with 5:58 left ended the Vikings' scoring.

Niles rushed 58 times for 425 yards led by Hess with 28 attempts for 217 yards and one TD. Hess also had the three two-point conversions.

"Going to the state finals is amazing. It's never happened here at Niles so just to see everyone happy is incredible. It's not just for us but for the entire community as a whole," Hess said. "After giving up that early score we did a nice job of adjusting."

Sam Rucker piled up 138 yards in 16 tries.

"This feels great, but we can't stay comfortable because we still have next week (finals) to go. I got a charley horse in the first half and the only thing I was worried about was how soon I'd be able to get back into the game. I wanted back in there right away. When I got back in I saw an open hole and had one guy to beat. He knicked my leg, but I was able to keep going. It was a great adrenalin rush. We know our offense can put up plenty of points so its just about our defense making enough stops to win the game," Sam Rucker said.

Although his stats don't always show it, Bennett's presence on the field has been very important to Niles success on offense.

"We just had to put that early fumble out of our minds. We did that and moved on and scored on most of our drives after that. We know that as long as our line is moving people that we are going to be fine. Talon Brawley had alot to do with my development at quarterback as his backup last year. It's crazy to think that now we're going to Ford Field next week," Bennett said.

Gordon finished with five touches worth 45 yards and three TDs for Niles.

"It all starts with the guys we have up front. Sometimes our ballcarriers weren't getting touched until they were already five or six yards upfield," Shaw said.

The Vikings' offensive line consisted of Malachi Burris, Asmus, Jordon Cunningham, Chase Brawley and Evan Williams.

"Our offensive line has alot of good chemistry and we just need to work hard every day and be effective for us to keep winning. South Christian was strong up front, but we did our job and came out on top. We just kept our heads up and kept driving to win this game," Brawley said.

On the defensive side of the ball, Niles was led in tackles by Olsen and Anderson with five each. Gordon, Elijah Norris and Sam Rucker all had four apiece.

"Defensively our kids were stellar today. The Vis kid has a nice touch and can put the ball in all kinds of places and has torched opposing defenses his whole career. I'm disappointed to see that he's not going to play football in college because I think he'd be a great player at the next level," Shaw said.

Niles' contain unit consists of linemen RJ Fielder, Bryce Young and Max Rucker; Hess and Cheney at inside linebacker and the secondary of Anderson, Olsen, Gordon and Jaden Ivory.

"Turnovers were big today and we scored off of them and that w as even better. We never had to punt and that was also big with Sam getting hurt because he wasn't going to be able to punt. Our kicker was also out with a concussion. But things just fell into place for us. We rode Sam. Paul (Hess), Peyton, Talen today, just like we have all year. Our offensive line controlled the line of scrimmage," Shaw added.

South Christian was led on the ground by VanDeGreind with 10 carries for 61 yards and Vis, who has signed to play basketball at Western Michigan University, tacked on 11 attempts worth 25 yards. The Sailors gained a total of 85 yards on the ground in 24 attempts.

Vis completed 15-of-32 passes for 217 yards in the air. Burgess caught nine passes for 121 yards and three TDs.

"With how well he (Vis) throws the ball nothing is ever safe until you get the ball back," Shaw said.

It was Niles 12th consecutive win after dropping its season opener to St. Joseph.

"Who would've thought we'd be where we are at right now after losing that first one. Other people didn't give us much of a chance then. We knew we were good, but we just had to go out and prove ourselves," Shaw said.

FALLS

Continued from page B1

team that has advanced to Friday's Division 4 state finals against Goodrich.

Afterwards Niles head coach Myles Busby quickly made the distinction between last year and the 2024-25 season.

"This game was a good learning experience for us. Kudos to Three Rivers because they played harded and wanted this game more than we did. We are everyone's Super Bowl after winning league last year. What happened a year ago is something the program earned, but the guys in our locker room now haven't. This is a completely new team. We have to understand how hard we have to work to get to that level,' Busby said. "As coaches we have to do a better job of preparing. You don't win anything in November. This group will be okay though."

Niles quickly bolted out to a 12-2 lead to start the contest behind the inside scoring of Brayden Favors and Donovyn Williams. Three Rivers whittled its deficit to five, 12-7, by the end of the period with Blake Stewart's two free throws and a three-pointer.

Favors buried a triple to give Niles a 15-7 advantage early in the second quarter. But Three Rivers used a relentless effort at the defensive end to keep itself close. Stewart came up with back-to-back steals and converted them into layups to bring the Wildcats back within two, 15-13.

Niles went back up by six after Favors' pair of free-throw attempts and Williams' fastbreak bucket. Stewart hit another triple to end the half and pull the hosts within three, 19-16, entering the intermission.

Quinton King's perimeter shot put Niles back up by five (21-16) to start the third quarter. Three Rivers took its first lead (23-22) just seconds later following a Lamonta Stone steal and Carter Langston basket. The Wildcats extended their margin to five points (27-22) following steals and layups from Drew Graver and Brayden Carpenter. Derrick Hill drained a pair of free throws for Niles to lessen the Vikings' deficit to just three, 27-24 entering the fourth quarter.

Three Rivers found itself on top 32-26 after a basket from senior floor leader Jace Gray. But Niles rallied to regain the lead 38-36 on Hill's finger-tip layup with 1:30 left in regulation. King then drained the first of two free-throw chances to put the Vikings up 39-36. However, Graver calmly drained a three pointer tying the game and sending the two teams into overtime.

A Jaymes Phillips triple to open the overtime gave Niles a 42-39 lead. Stewart's charity toss brought the Wildcats back within 42-40 with 2:53 left and Three Rivers tied the contest on a Carter Langston jumper just seconds later. Stone would drain the winning shot on a 9-foot jumper with 11.2 seconds left.

Niles took its final timeout. The Vikings returned to the floor and had a potential game-winning shot but Phillips' triple from the corner hit the rim and missed the mark. The clock ran out setting off a wild celebration on the court by Three Rivers' student body.

Three Rivers did a better job defensively cutting off Niles' scoring chances in the post over the second half.

"Three Rivers was pressuring us out on top more in the final half and we weren't seeing the floor very well. It should've been easier for us to get the ball underneath. Right now it's just guys playing outside of their roles right now who are playing more minutes than normal. It'll be a bit different look when we get a couple guys back here after football. Our school is in a position now where our teams are making long playoff runs which is a good problem to have," Busby said.

Favors finished as Niles' top scorer with 14 points. King added nine followed by Hill and Phillips with seven apiece and Phillips contributed five. The Vikings made 13 field-goal attempts, including five triples, and went 11-of-17 at the foul stripe.

Three Rivers was led in the scoring column by Stewart with 13. Graver finished with eight, Langston added seven. Carpenter, Gray, Stone and Barth all contributed four points each.

Three Rivers finished with 17 field goals, including five triples, and went 5-of-8 from the charity stripe.

Niles outrebounded Three Rivers 25-20. Williams pulled down 10 rebounds for the Vikings and Phillips added eight.

Three Rivers coach Brian Burg was pleased to see his team persevere.

"Our guys with experience understand the game much better and our younger kids are coming right along too. We don't have that superstar who can put up 25 points. I just have kids who can go and contribute in all areas with a rebound, pass or basket here or there. We found each other when we needed to tonight," Burg said.

THREE RIVERS 44, NILES 42

At Three Rivers

NILES (42): Quinton King Jr. 9, Braylen Favors 14, Derek Hill Jr. 7, Jaymes Phillips 7, Donovyn Williams 5. Totals 13 11-17 42.

THREE RIVERS (44): Drake Graver 8, B Carpenter 4, Blake Stewart 13, Jace Gray 4, Lamonta Stone 4, Carter Langston 7, Zander Barth 4. Totals 17 5-10 42.

Niles 12 19 24 39 42

T. Rivers 7 16 37 39 44

3-point baskets: Niles 5 (King Jr. 2, Phillips 2, Favors 1), Three Rivers 5 (Stewart 2, Graver 2, Langston 1). Total fouls: Niles 16, Three Rivers 21. Records: Niles 0-1, Three Rivers 1-0

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1 The HughesNet Gen5 service plans are designed to deliver download speeds of 25 Mbps and upload speeds of 3 Mbps, but individual customers may experience different speeds at different times of the day. Speeds and uninterrupted use are not guaranteed and may vary based on a variety of factors including: the configuration of your computer, the number of concurrent users, network or Internet congestion, the capabilities and content of the Websites you are accessing, network management practices as deemed necessary, and other factors. When you connect to the HughesNet service using Wi-Fi, your experience will vary based on your proximity to the Wi-Fi source and the strength of the signal.
2. **Free standard installation** applies to new Lease subscribers only. Not valid with Purchase option. Limited-time offer. Restrictions may apply.
3. Per the "5th, 6th, 7th and 8th FCC Measuring Broadband American Reports." Go to: https://www.hughes.com/who-we-are/resources/press-releases/
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Merchandise

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Miscellaneous For Sale

For sale, a refurbished mid-2019 Apple Macbook Pro with .4 GHz Intel Core i5 (13.3 inch, 8GB RAM, 256GB SSD) Space Gray (Renewed)
Brand Apple
Model Name MV962LL/A
Screen Size 13.3 Inches
Color Space Gray
Hard Disk Size 256 GB
CPU Model Core i5
Ram Memory Installed Size 8 GB
Operating System Mac OS
Special Feature IPS Retina Display, True Tone Technology, Touch Bar | Touch ID Sensor
Graphics Card Description Integrated
Asking $500. It is still in the box.

Also for sale, a RIF6 adjustable height standing desk converter — 32-inch wide laptop riser or dual monitor workstation. Easily sit or stand with gas spring lift. Still in the box. Asking $75. Will sell in combo with the computer or separately.

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Notices

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44,896 Miles.
Only $1,000 down!
$350 a month!
No Interest! No banks!
We do all our financing in house!
Call Scarlett Auto Sales today and ask about stock # 1938!
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2021 Kia Forte-Red
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Only $1,400 down!
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1979 Starcraft 18' Aluminum Deep V 110hp Johnson & Trailer (269)683-2400

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Boat has very low mileage. Seller mainly used the trolling motor. Didn't have much time for fishing. Price is for boat, Trailmaster trailer, trolling motor, Mercury BigFoot 60 HP boat motor and fish finder equipment.
If I do not answer, leave a message.
Pictures available via text.
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Call 985-444-5026 to let others know about job opportunities at your business.

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House calls, Free estimates.
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Lifetime Warranty on All Labor Performed
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EXCELLENT CLEAN-UP
*60 & 80 FT. BUCKET TRUCK
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PLEASE CALL
574-848-5845.

Public Notices

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

SUPERIOR COURT OF WASHINGTON
COUNTY OF YAKIMA
JUVENILE DIVISION
In re the Guardianship of
ASHBEN L. HIBBARD
D.O.B. 08/15/12
Minor Child.
Case No.: 24-7-00198-39
NOTICE AND SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION (Guardianship)

TO: James Berry, Alleged Father and Unknown Biological Father
A Petition to Establish Guardianship under Title 13 RCW was filed on July 31, 2024; A Fact Finding hearing will be held on this matter on: January 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at Yakima County Superior Court, Juvenile Division, 1728 Jerome Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902. YOU SHOULD BE PRESENT AT THIS HEARING. THE HEARING WILL DETERMINE IF THE COURT SHOULD ESTABLISH A TITLE 13 RCW GUARDIANSHIP AND APPOINT A GUARDIAN FOR THE ABOVE NAMED CHILD. A PETITION FOR ORDER APPOINTING TITLE 13 RCW GUARIDAN, IF GRANTED, COULD RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL RESTRICTIONS TO THE RIGHTS OF THE PARENT(S), GUARDIAN(S), OR LEGAL CUSTODIAN(S). To request a copy of the Notice, Summons, and Title 13 RCW Guardianship Petition, call DCYF at (509) 225-6500. To view information about your rights in this proceeding, go to www.atg.wa.gov. DATED this 20 day of November, 2024

Billie Maggard,
Yakima County Clerk

By: Amanda Marshall
Deputy Clerk,

Niles Daily Star:
Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and 14, 2024
24-7-00198-39

Selling your home?
Advertise here and sell it faster.
Call Classifieds at 269-591-6105.

PUBLIC NOTICE

HOWARD TOWNSHIP
CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
NOVEMBER 19, 2024

Supervisor Kasprzak called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Business Office, 1345 Barron Lake Road, Niles. The Pledge to the Flag was recited. Board members present: Wozniak, Gordon, Kasprzak, Conover, Johnson, Daly and Hurlbutt were present.
Board Action
Approved Meeting Agenda.
Approved the minutes of the 10/15/24 Board meeting
Approved the financial report with an ending balance of 1,629,387.57 including a CD
Approved the payment of bills through November 19, 2024
Approved the departmental reports
Approved Purchase of fire truck from Emergency Vehicle Plus for $1,066,461.00
Approved Resolution 2024-009 Cass County Mitigation Plan
Thank you to Mike Daly and Jack Frost for years of service to Howard Charter Twp.
Adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm

Niles Daily Star:
Nov. 30, 2024
MEETING SYNOPSIS

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF NILES
BERRIEN COUNTY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PUBLIC INPUT
ON APPLICATION
FOR ZONING AMENDMENT
TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: That on Wednesday, December 18, 2024 at 5:30PM Local Time, a public hearing will be held by the City of Niles, Planning Commission, at Niles City Hall, 333 N. 2nd Street, Niles, Michigan, 49120. Any interested person or group may address the City of Niles Planning Commission on a request for a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to allow for marihuana provisioning centers until 10:30PM to complete all transactions and allow microbusinesses to transition to retail and grow Class A, B, or C based on the district standards. The comment of any member of the public or any special interest group may be limited in time. Such limitation shall not be less than three minutes unless otherwise explained by the presiding officer, subject to appeal by the Planning Commission.
The ordinance amendment is available for public inspection upon request by contacting Niles City Administration, by telephone at 269-683-4700 Ext 3011 or by email at AdminEA@nilesmi.org.
If approved, the amendment will allow provisioning centers additional time to finish all transactions by 10:30 p.m. after closing to the public at 10:00 p.m. Microbusinesses transitioning to retail and grow Class A or retail grow Class B may remain in Regional Commercial as permitted use. Microbusinesses in the Industrial District are permitted to transition to retail and grow class A, B, or C.
The City of Niles will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to those individuals with impairments who wish to attend its public meetings upon receiving at least one week's notice. Any such individuals requiring such aids or services should contact the City by writing to: City of Niles ADA Coordinator, 333 N. 2nd Street, Suite 301, Niles, MI, 49120, or by calling 269.683.4700, ext. 3011.
Further information may be obtained by contacting the Niles City Administrator's Office at (269) 683-4700. Written comments received prior to or at the specified time and date of the hearing will also be considered and should be mailed or delivered to the City Administrator at Niles City Hall, 333 N. 2nd Street, Suite 301, Niles, Michigan 49120.
Richard Huff
City Administrator
City of Niles

Niles Daily Star:
Nov. 30, 2024
HEARING 12.18.24

PUBLIC NOTICE

Apex Storage Auction @ 2601 N. 5th St. Niles MI 49120 on December 14, 2024 starting at 10:00 AM.

Dalton Baker - Power washer,power washer, master fan clutch set, motorcycle windshield, shop vac

Quentelia Potts-2 lamps, sofa, dryer, queen bed, dresser, TV stand, pillows

Krystal Hash-2 tennis rackets, miscellaneous items

Vincent Norris-Folding table, auto rims, tires, miscellaneous items

Derek Ash-Dirt bike, helmets, wrenches,motorcycle parts, dressers

Niles Daily Star:
Nov. 30 and Dec. 7, 2024
STORAGE AUCTION

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Mishawaka High School visits SMC for IT

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — A panel discussion featuring two Southwestern Michigan College students and presenters of five earlier breakout sessions concluded Mishawaka High School's information technology visit Nov. 22.

The panel in the Student Activity Center theatre featured faculty members Eric Clayborn, who earlier led PC upgrades, and Andrew Churchill, password security; Chuck Allen and Sergio Moreno of Midwest Energy and Communications (MEC); cybersecurity major Casey Clark, president of the Roadrunner esports team from Edwardsburg; and Hartford freshman Alexus Bond, an IT networking major.

Churchill detailed three steps to improve personal cybersecurity — enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) on critical accounts such as bank, email and phone to add an extra layer of protection; choose a reputable manager such as KeeP-ass or Bitwarden to generate strong passwords; and update passwords as each service is used.

"My favorite thing, 100-percent, is helping old people who have never touched technology before," Allen said. "We help people use (MEC's) high-speed, fiber-optic internet service. We make videos we share on social media to help our customers have a great experience."

Allen said a new career is "prompt engineering," the process of creating and refining natural language instructions to guide artificial intelligence (AI) models to generate desired responses.

Another is "penetration tester," a cybersecurity professional who simulates cyberattacks on a company's systems to identify and fix security vulnerabilities.

"Quantum computing is on the horizon as well," Churchill said. "Professors have to be a professional twice over. I have to know IT and I have to know teaching. Working with people and watching them grow and develop is the coolest thing ever. It's a team sport, 100 percent."

"Teamwork makes the dream work," Moreno agreed. "Communication gives you a bigger picture and, potentially, better solutions."

Information security jobs are predicted to grow by 33 percent from 2023 to 2033, which is more than eight times the national average for all jobs.

In computer and IT occupations, employment is projected to grow faster than average, with an average of 356,700 openings per year.

SMC's IT program gives students an introduction to the field, learn the basics of computer hardware, maintenance and network repair. After mastering those skills, they move into in-depth studies of desktop infrastructure, wireless communication, installing and administering servers, network security and CISCO routers and switches.

They have the opportunity to pick up internationally-recognized certifications from CompTIA, CISCO and Microsoft and to gain invaluable professionalism skills such as project management, presentation and business communication. Finally, they apply their know-how in an internship.

The Associate in Applied Science in Networking is a two-year degree designed for entry-level work. It can also be adapted to transfer to a four-year school for a bachelor's degree, such as partner Ferris State University.

There are also one-year certificate options in help desk or cybersecurity administration.

"Maybe you're interested in IT, but you're also interested in accounting. You can combine accounting with a cybersecurity minor in a bachelor's degree. " said Churchill, who left high school intending to teach history, then joined the Army.

"I didn't know I was doing IT stuff," Churchill said, "but I was with all the radios I fixed. I considered becoming a social worker. I got a communications degree. It wasn't until I did my master's in business administration that I started to see that business and IT are similar in a lot of ways, so I turned around and did a master's degree in information security."

Clark started with a middle-school coding class. High-school computer classes captured her interest. Her older brother, a gamer, attended SMC before her "and I learned from him. He's going to be the first person to graduate from Ferris State with an esports productions degree."

Bond, also a percussionist with the Symphonic Band, said, "It is hard not majoring in music, but I do enjoy it, so it is worth it."

Bond tinkered with her mother's and brother's phones whenever there was an issue. "I love the hardware and tearing things open to see what each component does. Then in middle school I took a coding class like Casey and eventually coded my own game."

Clark and Intramural Coordinator Ben Evans welcomed visitors to the Midwest Energy and Communications Esports Arena in the Barbara Wood Building, home to the SMC esports team.

The arena's student-built machines showcase the IT program while also providing opportunities for students who love computers, gaming and competing.

Student officers such as Casey manage the team and schedule competitions as part of the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE) and the National Esports Collegiate Conference (NECC), which sponsors regular season competition and national championships for Valorant, Rocket League, League of Legends, Rainbow Six and Overwatch.

SMC's esports team competes in Rocket League and Valorant but hopes to expand game options based on team members' interests and expertise. SMC's Rocket League team was the NECC national runner-up in its division in 2022.

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SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

The MEC ESports Arena.

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Buchanan to draft contract with Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

BUCHANAN — Buchanan City Commissioners are looking to establish a new relationship with the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber to revitalize economic development work in the Buchanan downtown and become a Michigan Main Street community.

Commissioners heard from Chamber President Arthur Havlicek and LiveBuchanan Board Chair Randy Hendrixson before voting to move forward with drafting a contract with the Chamber. LiveBuchanan is a volunteer organization formed in 2023 to spur economic development, pursue the Main Street designation and start a small business incubator.

Havlicek presented a comprehensive strategy for LiveBuchanan's future. He outlined a new organizational structure designed to improve operational efficiency, enhance financial oversight, and provide greater regional support for downtown revitalization. The Regional Chamber will provide staffing, shared services such as marketing and grant writing and access to cutting-edge data.

The Main Street effort had been on hold since August as commissioners first debated support for LiveBuchanan and then how to use it as a vehicle to bring back the Downtown Development Authority. That time period also saw the resignation of the city's assistant community development director, Ashley Regal, who had worked with LiveBuchanan.

Havlicek proposed providing the city with the staff and expertise needed to pursue the Michigan Main Street designation as well as to re-establish the DDA to provide longterm funding for downtown economic development efforts. Having the Main Street designation will provide the city with more resources to promote that development.

The proposal would have the city pay the Chamber $100,000 annually for five years. Hendrixson and Havlicek pointed out that the city is already budgeting $69,000 for downtown economic development efforts and still has the leftover funds from the dissolution of the previous DDA.

The funds would primarily be used to hire a LiveBuchanan director to do that work. The director would be a Chamber rather than city employee and have access to Chamber resources and services. The city would receive regular reports about LiveBuchanan activities and have representation on and oversight of the LiveBuchanan Board.

"The Regional Chamber's involvement is designed to enhance LiveBuchanan's efforts and maximize the City's return on investment," Havlicek said. "I thank the commissioners for recognizing the transformative potential of this new partnership and look forward to positioning Buchanan as a model for community-driven revitalization."

"The collaboration with the Regional Chamber is a game-changer for LiveBuchanan," Hendrixson said. "Their support provides critical resources and expertise, enabling us to implement the Michigan Main Street Four-Point Approach™ more effectively. We're confident the partnership will drive sustainable growth, attract new investment, and strengthen the long-term vitality of our downtown."

Commissioners' debate and discussion before the vote centered more on the money obligation than the value of the Chamber partnership. Commissioner Dan Vigansky questioned spending that much money and tried unsuccessfully to postpone action until March or April. He also wanted assurances that the DDA will still be brought back.

"I want to postpone this to April so our new city manager can look at it," Vigansky said. "It's also a $500,000 commitment and I think it will be detrimental to recreating the DDA. LiveBuchanan has not been open and we've given them money without any oversight."

He said Buchanan should stop pretending to be something it isn't and compare itself to what's been done in other communities such as Bridgman. "Bridgman has the nuclear plant and the lake, we need to stop pretending we have the same," he said.

Commissioner Raquell George also questioned the accountability of the LiveBuchanan organization and the need for new bylaws for them but ended up voting to move forward with drafting a contract with the Chamber. As Commissioner Patrick Swem noted, drafting the agreement doesn't commit the city to spending the money yet.

"The problem I see with only pursuing the DDA is that we're trying to carve out a path by ourselves," he said. "This allows us to get help from the Chamber which has been delivering across the region. This contract will provide more support and the value they will bring in is more than what we will pay."

Mayor Mark Weedon said he favored pursuing the contract with the Chamber to support LiveBuchanan efforts, saying that the city needs to take advantage of the "palpable vitality" that's starting to be seen in the city.

In other action at Monday's meeting, commissioners selected Bendzinski & Co. to perform financial and rate consulting services for $24,000 and Jones & Henry Engineers to assist the wastewater treatment plant in determining pollutant levels for $9,875.

Commissioners voted to keep the commission meeting times the same, at 7 p.m. rather than 6 p.m., for 2025. They also cancelled the Dec. 23 commission meeting.

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Just in!! Loaded moonroof with teen miles.. MSRP over $41,000
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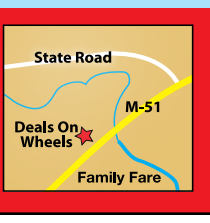

MICHIANA Life
PEOPLE • ENTERTAINMENT • SHOP • ART

BOLD NEW EATS

PostBoy brings year-round destination restaurant to southwest Michigan

BY JUSTIN FLAGEL | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Entrepreneur Ben Holland, chef and restaurateur James Galbraith, and a team of regional hospitality talent are delivering a new experience for dining and gathering in Harbor Country, just a short walk from the beach in downtown New Buffalo.

PostBoy is a new restaurant, named for the ship of New Buffalo founder, Captain Wessel D. Whittaker. His ship, PostBoy, was rumored to be a mail ship before being acquired by Whittaker. As the story goes, he was sailing from Buffalo, New York to Chicago, but crashed on local shores while attempting to avoid a storm.

Every aspect of the space is intentional in the 10,000 square foot indoor-outdoor restaurant, located at 207 North Whittaker Street. Just two weeks after their launch on November 1, the staff was busy in the hours before opening, tweaking environmental aspects and finalizing the day's priorities. Bar staff gave rapt attention to Bar Director Krystin Reuber's latest in drink innovations while kitchen staff could be seen readying for the evening through the open-concept cooking area visible from the entire restaurant.

"Fun" was the word heard most during the tour, referencing the food and drinks menus, the building, and PostBoy's branding, right down to the mascot, Wes the frog.

Holland has passed the building for years, desiring to take what was an eyesore on the main corridor of New Buffalo and transform it into a beautiful and inviting restaurant. The curves and colors both indoors and outdoors reach to passers-by, drawing them into a soft and warm space that Holland hopes will allow visitors to feel comfortable in meeting people and trying new things.

Galbraith, who helped in the building design, echoes the sentiment in his menu. His goal is to open audiences to elevated, chef-driven

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THE POSTBOY FRIED CHICKEN SANDO

NOTHIN' LIKE A CREEKSIDE SUNDAY

Dowagiac resident to release debut Christian album

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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Music has been a part of David Stroup's life for as long as he can remember.

From his days as a member of his family's music group The Singing Stroup Family to performing in Nashville to leading worship at Creekside Church in Dowagiac, Stroup's love for music is what drives him to this day as a Dowagiac resident.

That love for music coalesced into Stroup's debut album, "Creekside Sunday." Recorded at Chapel Valley Studios in Tennessee, Creekside Sunday is set to be released Sunday, Dec. 1 on digital platforms including Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, Pandora and more. Physical copies can be purchased at Creekside Church following church services.

The 12-track Christian album – inspired largely by Creekside Church, Stroup's home church in Dowagiac – is an eclectic blend of several genres including country, gospel, southern rock, hymnals and more.

According to Stroup, the concept of Creekside Sunday came to him in February after spending the day at church.

"I sent myself a text and I said there ain't nothin' like a Creekside Sunday," he said.

Stroup describes Creekside Church as its own character in the album.

"It almost sounds alive," he said. "At Creekside, we'll go into a soul-gospel break and then I'll do country-gospel on the next one. That's Creekside; It's not one-dimensional."

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Stroup moved to Dowagiac with his family in 1969. As a youth, Stroup performed at churches and music events with his mother, father and brother as the Singing Stroup family and played percussion in the Dowagiac Union High School Marching Band. One of the first churches he attended in Dowagiac was First General Baptist Church, which later became Creekside Church, a space that would go on to inspire Stroup musically and spiritually.

"A lot of stuff comes out of here, which makes it fun," he said. "I think the cohesiveness of the Creekside Sunday album really was the church Legacy of me being here almost 30 years of my life."

Stroup spent much of time in the 1980s performing in Nashville chasing his dream of becoming a music star.

"I started chasing country music and rock and roll. I was going to Nashville to record and trying to get connections like a lot of people do from small towns," he said.

While he has never stopped performing, Stroup has turned his musical talents back towards his church. He is currently both the worship leader and music director at Creekside. When he's not performing or spending time at church, Stroup takes care of his wife, Sheila, who suffered a stroke in 2018. Sheila's creativity and courage serve as one of Stroup's biggest inspirations.

"I literally fall in love with her more every day," he said. "I've known her since October 1981."

For Stroup, his album is a culmination of his life's experiences and the blessings he has received. He thanked his Creekside Church family, his

See SUNDAY, Page C5

Underground Laugh Lounge to host Costaki Economopoulus Christmas show

COMMUNITY REPORT
Leader Publications

Stuff your Christmas stockings with Tickets from the Underground Laugh Lounge, featuring one of the biggest names in comedy this holiday season.

Costaki Economopoulus will be bringing his talents to the venue at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Dec. 20-21.

For 20 years, Costaki has been living his dream as a full-time stand up comic.

He has written jokes for Bette Midler, Jay Leno, MTV and BET. Readers may have seen him on Showtime, or heard him on Sirius, but probably know him best from his regular appearances on the nationally syndicated Bob and Tom Radio Show.

Founded in 2023, ULL features a stage and a variety of seating, along with the comedy club's own downstairs bar and facilities. A mural on the back wall features legendary comedians and personalities painted to appear as if they were sitting and taking in the show. The remodel exposed a brick archway, near where attendees will enter, including an available lift for those unable to use the stairs, and a glass case for performers to sell merchandise. The entry hallway is already decorated with photos of the house MCs and the staff who will be serving.

The Study, a speakeasy bar located on the second floor of the building serving a variety of whiskeys, cocktails, beers and wines.

The ULL is housed in Niles' historic Carnegie Library building, which was built in 1904 and served as the center for learning and community gatherings through 1963. Since that time, the library has housed the Niles Chamber of Commerce. When the Chamber moved in 2017, the library did not find a new owner and has been sitting vacant, until now.

The proprietors of The Study and the Underground Laugh Lounge decided it was time to breathe life back into this beautiful historic building to serve both Niles and the Michiana community by bringing laughter and a touch of mystery to the region.

GIVE SUPPORT

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- Bleach
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COLLECTION TIMEFRAME
Ongoing. we will have a container set up all year and drop off monthly

ST. MARGARET'S HOUSE ITEMS NEEDED
- Full size bottles of shampoo & conditioner, lotion, body wash, & deodorant
- Sanitary pads
- Diapers in sizes 4, 5, 6
- Baby Wipes
- Socks

COLLECTION TIMEFRAME
Ongoing. When we get enough donated items we will drop off

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KENNY G TO PERFORM AT FOUR WINDS NEW BUFFALO

COMMUNITY NEWS
Leader Publications

NEW BUFFALO — The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi's Four Winds Casinos has announced that multi-platinum selling and Grammy-Award winning instrumentalist Kenny G will perform a Valentine's Day show at Four Winds New Buffalo's Silver Creek® Event Center at 9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 14. Ticket prices for the show start at $79, plus applicable fees, and can be purchased online at Ticketmaster beginning at 10 a.m. Friday, Nov. 22. Hotel rooms are available on the night of the concert and can be purchased with event tickets.

Kenny G is one of the best-selling artists of all time. With global sales totaling more than 75million records and 1.5 billion streams, the jazz icon has accumulated 24-award nominations throughout his 50-year career and has taken home a Grammy Award, American Music Award, two NAACP Awards, and two Soul Train Music Awards.

With classic, top-selling studio albums including "Duotones," "Silhouette," "Breathless," "Miracles," "The Holiday Album" and "Heart and Soul and Brazilian Nights," Kenny has maintained a prominent level of creative excellence through decades of unprecedented commercial success.

In December of 2023, Kenny G released his 20th studio album, "Innocence," which features 12 tracks, all of which embrace the theme of lullabies, a cultural and familial tradition that is incredibly special to Kenny.

Details on concerts and other performances at Silver Creek Event Center are available at https://fourwindscasino.com/newbuffalo/entertainment/event-center.

Teather (left) and Debby Uhrik are gearing up to open Isabella Grace LLC, a crafting retreat center and supply store located at 137 S. Front St., Dowagiac

Mother-daughter duo bringing crafting retreat center to southwest Michigan

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

A new crafting destination is opening its doors in Dowagiac just in time for the holiday season.

Mother-daughter duo Debby and Teather Uhrik are preparing to open Isabella Grace LLC, a crafting retreat center and supply store located at 137 S. Front St., Dowagiac, in the former Round Oak Revisited building.

The St. Joseph residents have been searching far and wide for a space to open a craft retreat center. After visiting the 137 S. Front St. property, which was built in 1892 and formerly housed a tobacco store, a coffin store and most recently the Round Oak Revisited restaurant, Teather and Debby knew they had found the right space.

"We went through multiple buildings and hundreds of houses trying to find the right place," Teather said. "We walked in here and we were sold. We fell in love immediately."

According to Teather, Isabella Grace plans to open its doors Sunday, Dec. 1. Guests will be able to host quilters, artists and other forms of crafters on retreat, with guests lodged in two apartments on the second floor. The main floor features both the crafts store as well as the creative space for guests to work on projects.

"We've been Grand Rapids, we've gone to South Bend, Ann Arbor and put out flyers saying we were coming because a lot of these people are gonna probably either drive or take Amtrak and come and stay," Teather said. "We're hoping that we can bring in 24 people a week for the retreat center, so 96 per month. It would be like a small boutique hotel. We're going to bring tourism to Dowagiac."

Teather said that the basement space will be where community classes will be held, with the goal of providing classes for children to connect with arts and crafts.

"We want to get kids off of technology and get them back into basic traditional arts," Teather says. "Skills that they can take with them everywhere for forever."

If all goes well, Teather and Debby said there is room to open another retreat center in the space in the near future.

The duo appreciates the support from the Dowagiac community.

"This community has been amazing since the minute we met them," Teather said. "They have been so supportive and friendly. The city has been behind us and they've been supportive too."

Isabella Grace hosted a soft opening during Dowagiac's Christmas Open House weekend where community members were able to explore the main floor of the building. Teather enjoyed the experience and is looking forward to future Dowagiac events.

"We didn't expect this to be like a Hallmark movie, which is what it feels like today. It's really wonderful; we love that they constantly have stuff going on in the city. The downtown area is not forgotten about like other places. It seems like they really do a good job promoting the surrounding area and all the business owners. We're excited to be part of the community. We love this little town."

For more information, find "Isabella Grace LLC" on Facebook or contact Isabella Grace LLC at (269) 287-9259.

South Bend to host Dinner Detective Murder Mystery Dinner Show

COMMUNITY REPORT
Leader Publications

Suspense, intrigue and dinner are on the menu as South Bend is set to host the Dinner Detective Murder Mystery Dinner Show.

From 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14 at Embassy Suites by Hilton South Bend at Notre Dame, 1140 E. Angela Blvd., guests will be transported to a world of immersive deception and interactive theatrical experience.

Guests will be able to try to solve a hilarious mystery while feasting on a fantastic dinner. Just beware, the culprit is hiding in plain sight somewhere in the room, and you may find yourself as a Prime Suspect before you know it. Anyone in the room can end up being a part of the show, and the action happens throughout the entire room. Throughout the night, a crime will occur, hidden clues will be revealed and detectives will help everyone try to crack the case. In the end, a Prize Package awaits the Top Sleuth who provides the best answer before the killer is unmasked.

Unlike a traditional murder mystery dinner show, Dinner Detective Murder Mystery Dinner Show actors are not dressed in costume and are hidden in the audience, which results in a fun, social and interactive evening suitable for all adults.

Each ticket includes their signature award-winning murder mystery dinner theatre show, along with a buffet dinner, waitstaff gratuity, and plenty of surprises during the show.

Tickets start at $69.95 and are available online at thedinnerdetective.com.

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

SMC TO HOST HOLIDAY BAND, CHOIR CONCERT

submitted | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

The SMC Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Combo, Symphonic Band, Concert Choir, Choral Scholars, and Men's Ensemble are preparing to share a special holiday performance at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Dale A. Lyons Building. Guest performers, soloists, small ensembles, and other special surprises fill out the program. Guests will enjoy some of the classic holiday selections and ring in the season as the SMC Bands and Choirs present their annual gift to the community.

Sesame Street Live! Say Hello announces special stop in Kalamazoo

COMMUNITY REPORT
Leader Publications

KALAMAZOO — Round Room Live and Sesame Workshop have announced a new live show, "Sesame Street Live! Say Hello."

The live show will bring the characters from the iconic Sesame Street to life in a brand-new interactive production that will tour the U.S. and Canada, with a stop in Kalamazoo on May 11, 2025.

Tickets for the Sesame Street Live! Say Hello will go on sale Friday, Nov. 22, with pre-sales starting Tuesday, Nov. 19. For tickets and additional information, visit sesamestreetlive.com.

Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Cookie Monster, and their friends from Sesame Street are coming to your neighborhood to say hello. At Sesame Street Live! Say Hello, sing, dance, and play alongside your favorite furry friends, all while you follow Elmo's puppy, Tango, in a fun game of hide and seek.

"We are overjoyed and honored to be collaborating with Sesame Workshop to bring a brand-new tour of Sesame Street Live to stages across the U.S. and Canada," said Round Room Live Founder and Co-President Stephen Shaw. "Round Room Live has a long history of exciting, innovative, and engaging productions, and we're thrilled to combine our dedication to premium, unforgettable entertainment with the beloved characters of Sesame Street in an interactive musical adventure that will create memorable experiences for families of all ages."

"For over 50 years, Sesame Workshop has worked at the intersection of education, media, and research, creating joyful experiences that enrich minds and expand hearts," said Whit Higgins, Sesame Workshop Executive Vice President, Head of Global Enterprises. "Round Room Live has a history of working with new and iconic properties to create engaging and thrilling live events. We can't wait for families and friends to enjoy this brand-new Sesame Street show filled with song, dance, and a few fun and furry surprises."

Fans cana visit SesameStreetLive.com now for tour dates and ticket information, and follow Sesame Street Live social media for exclusive tour content.

EATS

Continued from page C1

food by integrating approachable, nostalgic flavors people know. His selections push boundaries, with "fun and playful takes on New American flavors with adventurous twists", leaning heavily on global flavors from Asia and South America. Already, the menu features items like the loaded potato gnocchi, a dumpling dish that may seem intimidating to pronounce, but channels the flavors of a baked potato topped with cheese, sour cream, and bacon. The offerings invite in the more "meat and potato" style of diner and gives them a stepping stone to elevated dining.

PostBoy is the third restaurant in the area for Galbraith, who helped found Houndstooth and Anemel, both in Benton Harbor. He brings more than two decades of experience, including studying under some of Chicago's most acclaimed chefs at locations such as Intro, Blackbird, Elske, S.K.Y., Bellemore, and BOKA.

Reuber brings a similar attitude behind the bar. Offerings in cocktails, beer, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for those of all preferences, but it's her hope to draw the patron into new flavors. She aims to have an evolving menu of approachable drinks that expand people's palates and bring them out of their comfort zone. Syrups and juices are made in house and modern techniques are applied to bring out flavors and balance drinks.

Her passion for mixology is crafted with more than six years serving as a bar manager and even now taking time to study master classes, visit other bars and restaurants, and experiment with new techniques and ingredients. She recalls "Test Tuesdays", an opportunity at a past bar job to experiment, sometimes stumbling and other times creating successful results. She hopes to revisit some of those concoctions at PostBoy.

"I've always said 'don't go into a cocktail married to the idea of what it's supposed to be,'" Reuber recalled. "Always let the cocktail tell you."

The team is rounded out by the likes of Chef de Cuisine Dont'e Shaw, who worked for two years in the three star MICHELIN-recognized restaurant, Alinea, General Manager Aaron Mace, with experience at several well-regarded Chicago restaurants, and Assistant General Manager, Samantha Noble, who previously worked under Chef James and has years of local restaurant experience.

On Sunday, November 17th, PostBoy kicked off the first of what will become a collaborative chef series, bringing in some of the nation's most acclaimed chefs. Chef Zach Engel of Galit, a MICHELIN-starred restaurant in Chicago, presented a meal with Galbraith, each offering three dishes. The series will continue, featuring the likes of David Posey of MICHELIN-starred Elske and Stephen Gillanders of Chicago's S.K.Y.

PostBoy sits just a few steps from New Buffalo's Amtrak station, allowing patrons the opportunity to watch trains roll in and out.

Ben and James traveled the country for inspiration in their building design, an ambience they describe as "Danish Coastal Retro Diner", borne out in small touches such as retro-movies playing on television screens, halo lights, and subtle placements of the mascot frog. The color wash on the walls is emphasized by nearby sunsets. The poured-concrete bar top features a variety of embedded glass, including beach glass collected from the local region. The open kitchen shows diners their meals being freshly prepared and allows the energies of the front and back to feed off each other.

Outside, care has been taken to provide a communal space in the form of a 6000 square foot patio. The yard beckons those passing by, inviting them to sit by one of two fire pits or join others at a communal table or under the custom Italian pergola. Surrounding public space has been beautified with native grasses and the yard is filled with trees including London Planetree & Ginko. In warmer months, a stage for live entertainment will be provided, as well as a walk-up bar, take-out window, and event space. A highlight is the 1949 Ford mail truck, which serves as a "merch store" selling t-shirts, hats, and more. Holland procured the truck Eureka, Montana and recalls asking the seller where it could be restored.

"He told me, 'there's one guy in Austin and one guy in Stevensville, Michigan."

Another local, Alexia Barreiro was commissioned to paint the mural on the building visible from the train tracks.

PostBoy is personal for Ben Holland. His family brought him to New Buffalo from Chicago each summer as a child to enjoy the lake, the beach, and trails.

"This is my happy place," he said.

He wanted to fix up the empty building and give something to the community he's loved his entire life.

"For me it's about the community and the hospitality, creating memories, bringing people together and leaving a little bit of a mark on this town that I care a lot about."

PostBoy is open from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Information can be found by visiting PostBoyNB.com or @PostBoyNB on social media. The restaurant does accept reservations, which can be placed via Tock.

LIGHTS AT FERNWOOD RETURNS TO NILES

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

Bright, beaming lights signaling the start of the holiday season can now be viewed from the Fernwood Botanical Garden in Niles.

"LIGHTS at Fernwood," a holiday lights event, began Friday, Nov. 29 and will operate from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays through Sunday, Jan. 4. LIGHTS will be closed on Mondays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

The event also will include light tunnels, cozy fire pits, a winter craft station, nature-inspired light sculptures, a full-sized LiteBrite, festive music as well as refreshments and gift shopping. Visitors will make bright memories while enjoying hot chocolate, other seasonal drinks, snacks, and festive light-up merchandise for all ages.

Per FBG, tickets are available online for one-hour entries from 6 to 7 p.m., 7 to 8 p.m., and 8 to 9 p.m. at fernwoodbotanical.org/lights. Parking is included in the ticket price.

Established in 1964, Fernwood consists of 105 acres of cultivated gardens and natural areas with woodlands, ravines, wetlands, and river frontage on the St. Joseph River. The garden is open year-round for Michiana residents to enjoy.

SUNDAY

Continued from page C2

wife Sheila and hos sons Dave and Jared for always being there for him. He hopes his album serves as inspiration to people from all walks of life.

"I want to bless somebody because the Lord blessed me," he said. "The world's in rough shape in a lot of ways. People have a lot of struggles and my struggles and challenges are nothing near what a lot of people go through. I'd really like to see people win and I hope people can get closer to God through it and hoping it lifts their spirits through the day. Anytime they listen to it I hope that it puts a smile on their face."

Stroup was able to realize his dream of releasing a studio album at the age of 60 – and he's not done yet. If all goes well, Stroup hopes to write a Christmas album with original songs in the near future. He encourages readers to continue pursuing their passions.

"I think when it comes to something that you're really interested in doing to follow your passion, you have to follow your heart," he said. "A lot of times, If a dream doesn't work out right off the bat or a breakthrough doesn't come quickly, you might feel defeated. If you gave me a million dollars to perform a concert I obviously would accept and it would be awesome, but It makes me feel just as good when I have a great night or the band's really on, and you're in that zone. There's an energy about it that you can't buy; it's a sensation."

LMC ensembles unite for annual Holiday Collage concert

COMMUNITY REPORT
Leader Publications

BENTON HARBOR — The warmth and spirit of the season will fill the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center Grand Upton Hall when the LMC Visual & Performing Arts Department presents its annual Holiday Collage concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4.

The College's complete lineup of instrumental and vocal ensembles will come together in song, accompanied by dramatic readings during this festive celebration. The evening features performances by the LMC Concert Choir, LMC Vocal Chamber, and Vox LMC directed

by Rebecca Derbas-Selvidge, the LMC Jazz Band directed by Danny Lopez, the Rock/Pop Ensemble directed by Don Savoie, and readings from theatre students under the instruction of Shalico Sain.

Among the planned musical pieces are "Joy to the World," "Christmas Memories," the much-loved Vince Guaraldi Trio standard "Christmas Time is Here" written for "A Charlie Brown Christmas," "Carol of the Bells," the German carol "Susanni," Tchaikovsky's "Dance

of the Sugar Plum Fairy," the popular Hebrew Hanukkah song "S'Vivon," and "Jingle Bells."

"Something special happens when our ensembles come together for this holiday concert. Each performer brings their gift of musicianship to the stage, but when they perform as one, they create something far greater than the sum of their parts. These concerts

remind us that music is about building community and sharing joy," stated Dr. Robert Lunn, Department Chair of Visual & Performing Arts.

Light refreshments and a cash bar will be available. In lieu of paid admission, a donation to the LMC Visual & Performing Arts Department is suggested to support the event.

For more information about the LMC Visual & Performing Arts department and performances, visit lakemichigancollege.edu/arts, email mmcaffrey@lakemichigancollege.edu, or call 269-927-8876.

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